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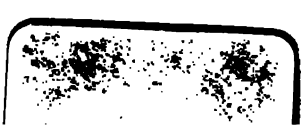

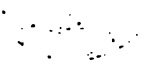

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

CHRONICLES
1356
1389
of
the
BASTILE.
FIRST
SIXTH
DESPOTISM
LIBERTY
1789

CHRONICLES

OF

THE BASTILE.

FIRST SERIES.

THE BERTAUDIÈRE.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

Chamerovzow (L. T.)

"Dans cet affreux château, palais de la vengeance,
Qui renferme souvent le crime et l'innocence."

HENRIADE.

LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, 72, MORTIMER ST. CAVENDISH SQUARE.

1845.

J. BILLING, PRINTER AND STEREOTYPER,
WOKING, SURREY.

EXPLANATION OF THE FRONTISPIECE.

In each of the four corners is an outline of the Bastile as it stood at the period indicated by the date above it, by which an attempt has been made to convey some idea of the gradual enlargement of this fortress, from the earliest phase of its existence down to its destruction by the patriots, who attacked it at the point shewn in the design in the centre.

The Kings grouped immediately above the latter, are habited in the costume of their time, and are more particularly associated with the history of the Bastile, than those monarchs whose effigies do not appear. Each figure is a portrait. Their names are, John I., or the Good; Charles V.; Charles VI., the Mad; Louis Onze; François I.; Charles IX., "*of execrable memory*;" Henri Quatre; Louis XIII., the Just; Louis XIV., the Desired; the Regent, Philippe Duke of Orleans, (born Duke of Chartres,) the great, great, great grand-father of his Majesty the reigning King of the French; Louis XV., and lastly, the unfortunate Louis XVI; comprising a period of four hundred and thirty-nine years.

On the broken column forming the right supporter their names will be found inscribed, together with those of the monarchs not represented in the group.

The massacre of Stephen Marcel the Provost of the Merchants under John, at the entrance of the Bastile which he had built, is shewn in the first group of figures, the second being the triumphal march of the English out of Paris by the Porte St. Antoine or the Bastile, of which they had held possession, together with the city, for sixteen years. The gallant Earl Willoughby was at this period (1436, Charles the VII. being King of France) Governor of Paris; the city was betrayed into the hands of the King, and the Earl, taken by surprise, was compelled to make good his retreat to the Bastile. An honourable capitulation ensued, and he marched out of the fortress, with the honors of war, retiring to Rouen, and thus terminating the dominion of the English in Paris.

The third group represents Henri Quatre allowing the bakers to carry bread into the city of Paris which he had invested. They entered by the gate of the Bastile, and the citizens, whom starvation could not vanquish, overcome by the King's magnanimity, at once gave up the contest and hailed him as their Monarch.

The fourth design shews the Man with the Iron-mask seated in his dungeon playing his favourite instrument—the guitar.

The group at the bottom is emblematic of the appeal of the opressed citizens to Liberty, responded to by the patriots, the result of whose combined efforts was the downfall of the hated edifice that for nearly five centuries had been "*The Palace of Vengeance! The Grave alike of Crime and of Innocence.*"

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PREFACE.

In terminating this *First Part* of his labours, the Author of the Volume now submitted to Public Ordeal, deems it incumbent upon him to address a few words not only to those who having started with him in the Race have kept pace with him until he has reached the Goal, but likewise to those who taking up this Serial in its completed form, are more likely to be biassed in their judgment of it by the reports that have from time to time gone abroad, relatively to the non-originality of the subject-matter offered to their perusal.

The First Number of "The Chronicles of the Bastile" had scarcely appeared before it was buzzed about, in literary circles, that the Publication was merely a translation of *some French Work* on the same subject, a rumour which rapidly gained ground until it found its way into the Public Journals, and through their powerful agency was disseminated as widely as their ramifications extend; a rumour, be it said, that from the circumstance of its owing its origin to an accidental and most extraordinary coincidence, was sufficient to damp the ardour of an aspirant to Public Favour and Literary Fame, and, moreover, calculated in some measure to neutralize the efforts of the very spirited and enterprizing Publisher under whose auspices the work was produced. But the Author, confident that the truth would eventually come out, redoubled his exertions, and the Publisher seconding those exertions, both Author and Publisher soon had reason to be satisfied with the result; whence the inference may

be fairly deduced that the Public was satisfied also: still is this not enough, for that same Public has likewise a right to know how far the Press was justified in promulgating a report which it was not prepared to substantiate by a corresponding fact.

Towards November in 1843, a work *in French*, advertised to be published in parts, appeared in Paris; it was intituled: "*Histoire de la Bastille, depuis sa fondation en* 1374 *jusqu'à sa destruction en* 1789; *ses prisonniers, ses gouverneurs, ses archives; details des tortures et supplices usités envers les prisonniers; révélations sur le régime intérieur de la Bastille; aventures dramatiques, lugubres, scandaleuses, évasions, archives de la Police. Par M. M. Arnould et Alboise du Pugol.*"

Now the "CHRONICLES OF THE BASTILE" came out in the following January, hence the plausibility of the assertion that they were "*a translation of some French Work,*" though the MS. had in fact been in the possession of the Publisher since the month of May 1843, accompanied by a pledge that the matter contained therein *was original;* more than this, the introductory chapter, headed—"*The Old Man of the Bastile*" was written in Paris in August 1841, as was also a great portion of the first five numbers—a period of at least two years and three months previously to the gentlemen above-named publishing their intention of compiling a "HISTORY OF THE BASTILE."

It will be remarked that the assertion was extremely vague notwithstanding; but its vagueness did not the less stigmatize the "BERTAUDIÈRE" as a plagiarism, although it is but justice to add, that in one or two instances the authors of the rumour honourably and publicly recanted their opinion.

At the present day, when translations and adaptations from the French are so common that any school-boy, possessing half a smattering of "*Boyer and Chambaud,*" may at once write himself down an Author, it was not extraordinary that the pub-

lication, under such peculiar circumstances, of a Serial like the "CHRONICLES OF THE BASTILE," should be received with distrust, though had it proved a *copy* instead of an *original*, it is very certain that the fact would not have escaped the hawk-eye of the thrift-seeking caterers to the prevailing taste for cheap literature, and that long ago the public would have been inundated with "CHRONICLES OF THE BASTILE," in every variety of form.

As the "REVUE DE PARIS" (so asserts one of our friends) has recently done the Author the honour of translating the "BERTAUDIÈRE" into *French*, he would not be surprised were he next accused of having plagiarized himself.

Having procured a copy of the *first number* of Messrs. Arnold and du Pugol's work, the Author of the "CHRONICLES" was gratified to find that beyond the unprecedented coincidence of the two publications appearing within so short a time of each other, and a similitude of title and purpose, there existed between them nothing more in common, the character of the former being *not* that of "AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE," but of a condensed summary of some of the principal events comprised between the years 1371 and 1789; as, however, the foregoing facts could not conveniently be made public at the time, the accusation of plagiarism was of necessity allowed to weigh upon this Serial until its completion should afford the Author an opportunity of vindicating himself from that charge, and at the same time of absolving the Gentlemen of the Press from the very pardonable error of judgment into which they were in consequence induced.

It only remains for the Author now to assert *upon his honour*, that the present publication is neither a *translation*, nor an *adaptation*, nor an *imitation* of *any French work*; the *historical portions* of the narrative have been derived from sources open to all the world, provided only that "all the world" know how to

come at them, whilst for the fictitious elements that have served to lend the chief interest to the scenes he has attempted to depict, he is not amenable to public interrogation, though openly confessing his intention of drawing from the same fount again when he offers the "SEQUEL TO THE BERTAUDIÈRE" to the perusal of those who feel interested in the fate of their friend JACQUES.

LONDON, 30th June, 1845.

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THE OLD MAN OF THE BASTILE.

INTRODUCTORY.

It was eight o'clock on the sultriest morning of the sultry month of July 1840, that I arrived at Paris, alighting at the *Bureau des Messageries Royales*, in the *Rue Notre Dame des Victoires*. It is scarcely worth stating, that after a twenty four hours' jolt over the stones of the royal road of Boulogne and Paris, I was very glad to reach the *Hôtel* to which I had been recommended, and rest my jumbled bones until nature was recruited. This necessary duty performed, and the not less necessary ablutions, my next undertaking was to reconnoitre the *lions;* but as this was a task not performed in a day, and which would require more than a day's writing to do over again, I shall not detail my peregrinations through the capital of *La belle France*, lest those who read be as fatigued in mind as I was in body, and as inclined to sleep, after rambling through its dirty and rugged streets.

My method of exploring the French Metropolis I feel bound to bequeath to travellers: it was, to chalk out in my mind's eye, a new circuit every morning, taking the Seine and its quays as beacons; my hotel of course forming the point of departure and my goal; then, striking "off, off and away," through lanes and by-streets, narrow, rugged, and dirty; through *carrefours, points et places;* up boulevards and along quays; through barriers and across bridges; I gradually retraced my steps homewards, possessing an extended knowledge of the topography of Paris.

The market-places formed a centre of attractions of various kinds, which I never could muster up self-denial to resist. Setting aside the contemplation of the person and diversified costume of the itinerant venders of food of all sorts, and without staying to take a physiognomical survey of the features of every *marchande des quatre saisons*,*

* The *Marchande des quatre saisons* is a well known Parisian character; the term translated literally, signifies "*merchant of the four seasons*," that is, a person who sells the vegetables peculiar to each season of the year. These people have no rented stall, but like the basket women of London, migrate from one place to the other, selling their commodities to the passer-by. They are very peculiar in their mode of addressing customers—making use of certain endearing epithets mostly selected from the articles they deal in—"*my little cabbage*," "*my little rose*," "*my pretty bird*," "*my sweet flower*," *&c. &c.*, are perfectly irresistible The *marchande des quatre saisons* who stands in the *Halle*, or *Market of the Innocents*, pays a rent to the municipality of Paris.

of every *Poissarde de la Halle*,† I often spent a solitary hour in calculating the degrees of comparative misery to which this relatively insignificant class might reduce the good burgesses of Paris, if, during the agitation of any question of public interest, its worthy members should turn despotic, and like those of our House of Commons, cut off the supplies.

Who could depict the consternation, the horror, the despair, of the Parisian Gargantua, on finding himself suddenly deprived of his *petits pois*, (young green peas) his *haricots verds*, (young French beans) and of the long category of green-meat after which his heart sighs in the season? Paris would rise *en masse*, and suborn a deputation to deprecate the choler of the *market gentry*, should the latter ever think proper to militate, in the manner aforesaid, against their own immediate interests.

After the scenes of actual life, my greatest gratification was to wander over those of life and actions past long since—to muse over the antiquities of the *Cité*—to lurk about the spots hallowed by association, and lose myself in the labyrinth of their early history. What scenes have I witnessed as imagination would carry me back to the time when the ruins, now peeping out here and there like decrepid old men, were in the hey-day of their youth, upright and whole; proudly setting Time at defiance—laughing to scorn the ravages he threatened to their cement and stone-work—the flesh and blood, the bone, marrow and muscle of their existence! Often has an unbidden tear paid tribute to these friends of the world's youth—to these venerable relics of defunct centuries—these half-living mummies of things that have been. As friends I love them—as old friends I venerate them—as deceased friends, I have paid their memory the tribute due from one friend to another.

But not to digress further:

In the course of my peregrinations through the tortuous streets of this Metropolis, I chanced to meet with an individual whose eccentricities were so remarkable, that my attention was attracted to him, although I observed he was unnoticed by the passers-by, most of whom appeared to know him.

He was sitting on an old shattered post, immediately opposite the site of the far-famed BASTILE ST. ANTOINE, his chin resting on his left hand placed over his right, which grasped a staff—a staff of the olden time—with a knob of massive gold, most curiously fashioned. His hair, that is as much of it as escaped from beneath an ancient three-

† The *Poissarde de la Halle*; Anglice, the *Billingsgate fish-wife*. The one is a perfect type of the other. Those familiar with the horrors of the Revolution will not have forgotten the conspicuous part these women played in the tragedy of the "*Princesse Lamballe*." They were more violent than the most blood-thirsty of the men who forced the Palais Royal and the Thuileries, and the unfortunate monarch, who ultimately fell a sacrifice to the miscreants, was even spitten on by a Poissarde, who, bolder than her companions, obtained by this act the unenviable title of "LA CRACHEUSE," or The Spitter. She was subsequently guillotined. (*Souvenirs de la Revolution, par Andrè.*)

cornered hat, was white and grizzly, and confined behind in a small black bag; in fact his whole exterior bespoke one of the *ancien régime.*

Although his person bore the indices of extreme old age, inward sorrow seemed to have furrowed his visage still more deeply, and so profound was the expression of sadness in it, that it produced in me a corresponding sentiment, and augmented the interest I already felt in this old man sitting by the way-side.

Whilst I stood gazing intently at him, his eyes were turned alternately towards where once stood the Bastile, and to Heaven, when his lips would move as though he solicited a favour of the Eternal.

Equally unwilling to disturb his reverie, or to leave the spot without gleaning some information respecting him, I addressed a question to a civil looking Commissioner who was standing at the door of a wine-shop, a few yards off.

"Every body knows him, Sir, but nobody knows who he is. You are a stranger?"

"Yes," replied I. "But tell me, does he often come here?"

"I believe you, Sir! regularly every morning, and remains sitting as you now see him, sometimes for hours, sometimes only for one. Do you want a Commissioner?"

"No! I thank you. And pray where does he live?" said I.

"On the sixth floor in *that* house." Here my informant indicated a house in the Rue St. Antoine, and added: "shall I go with you, Sir?"

"It is not necessary. But it is surprising nobody knows any thing about him," remarked I to my informant.

"Why Monsieur! how *can* any body know who or what he is, when he never opens his mouth! We have given him the nick-name of THE TACITURN."

"And not inappropriately! Yet surely there must be in the neighbourhood some old inhabitant that does know him."

"No there is not, sir! The Taciturn appears to be the oldest inhabitant of the Quarter St. Anthony. Father Cocard, who is more than eighty, has known him the last fifty years, and that's a pretty long time!"

"Well, but the porter* of the house," interrupted I.

"The porter!" retorted he contemptuously. "The porter knows as little of him as you do, or I. When he first went *concierge* to the house, twenty years ago, the Taciturn was then the oldest lodger."

"But did not his predecessor know any thing about him?"

* The Porter or *Concierge* of a French house is a very important personage, and plays a conspicuous part in the domestic economy of an establishment. If the landlord does not inhabit the house, the porter becomes his representative, and receives the rents. As the houses are generally very large and contain many families, he is a necessary appendage to answer calls, &c. &c. Woe to the man who is in his Porter's black books!

"I tell you *nobody* does. It is a mystery, and that's all about it."

Giving my irascible informant a twenty sous piece, I again turned my attention to the old man.

Arising slowly from his stone seat, he remained for a few seconds gazing as before, then abruptly turned off to the right into the *Rue St. Antoine.* Thither I followed him, until he reached a dilapidated building, apparently the remains of a religious house, although now converted to a less holy use, the lower portion being rented by the landlord of a wine-shop and the upper part by some of the poorest class, and not the most reputable of this thickly populated vicinage.

Hugging myself with the hope that he had not remarked my presence, I had got fairly within the threshold, he being already on the first landing, when turning suddenly about, he descended the stairs and faced me, staring with such intensity into my very soul, that my conscience smote me for seeking to fathom his secret. Having however completed his scrutiny, he as rapidly turned away again, mounting the steep stairs of the house with a speed I had judged him incapable of exercising.

Follow him I could not: I durst not explore the privacy of age and misery; but my curiosity was so strongly excited, I was determined to satisfy it.

It would be uninteresting to detail the lengthy colloquy which took place between me and the porter of the house relative to the old man, for the said porter being equally hard of hearing as of comprehension, I was at some pains to elicit the little information he possessed, and even that little I obtained only by following it up through the circuitous windings he thought proper to convey it in.

The substance of his communication was, that he, the porter, had in this capacity served the house twenty-three years and four months come last Candlemas; that The Taciturn was even then the oldest lodger, as he learnt of the porter his predecessor, whose predecessor had also known him, but only as the old man of the garret.

Many were my conjectures as I returned home, and deep was my reverie, as I pondered over the mystery which evidently shrouded the old man; and somehow I could not refrain from mixing him up with the bloody scenes of the Revolution, and with the darker and not less cruel ones of the Bastile.

A fortnight glided past, and every day I met the old man at the shattered post, without however having succeeded in drawing him into conversation; although once or twice I imagined that his eyes, on meeting mine, kindled with emotion — an emotion which was perhaps caused by the semblance in a fellow creature of sympathy with his state of solitude; perhaps by the respect a stranger paid to the untold, silent sorrows of an aged man.

At such a moment I endeavoured to attract his notice by addressing him, and one day being more determined than usual, forestalled him at his post, which he on arriving found occupied. He said nothing, but that steady gaze, so intense, so icy, drove my blood shivering through my veins, and brought contrition back. I arose,

and led him to his accustomed seat, apologizing for my wilful rudeness; still he spoke not, neither did he make any sign of thankfulness. I could fancy him saying it was *his* seat, it had *been* his for the last half century, and no one had a right to deprive him of it; having done so, to restore it was but a matter of course and of justice.

I was now nearly certain that the old man was dumb. I say, nearly certain, because I had observed him narrowly enough to warrant me in entertaining doubts as to this peculiarity; more than once he had opened his lips as though about to speak, but as suddenly closed them again, as if compelled to do so by some latent motive

Time, the ripener of events, cleared up the mystery. The tenth anniversary of the three glorious days was ushered in by the deep thunder of the cannon, whilst the dull and melancholy boom of the *bourdon* of *Notre Dame*, moaned its solemn salute to the dead.

The inhabitants of every *quartier* had deserted home to crowd to one spot, to the Column of July, erected on the *Place de la Bastille*, the approaches to which were blocked up by troops. The inauguration was that day to take place; the ashes of the victims of 1830 were to be deposited in their last resting place: in the vaults built on the site of the dungeons of the Bastile!

The remains of the Sons of Liberty, side by side with those of the Victims of Despotism!

I could not approach the shattered post, and sought the old man in vain. The neighbour at the corner of the street had not seen him, and it was the first time he had missed coming since the neighbour had been a resident there; now upwards of fifteen years! I went to the old man's house, and even penetrated to the door of his chamber, exploring it through the key-hole. It appeared empty; the only symptom of its being inhabitable was the presence of an iron bedstead, and of a large fire which was still burning fiercely.

I returned to witness the ceremony of the inauguration, my mind however wholly taken up with conjectures as to the whereabout of the mysterious individual whose disappearance had been so sudden. Totally unable to solve the enigma, I returned slowly home through dense throngs of living beings, and scarcely conscious of whither I was going, found myself at my door ere I imagined myself near it.

The old man was standing there!

And there *I* stood, as in a day-dream, transfixed, and mute with astonishment. Yet it was *no* dream, for there he was before me—the same meaning stare glazing his eyes, the same characteristic sadness in his countenance. I advanced, making an effort to pass by him into the hotel, but, looking significantly at me, he darted off homewards at a pace I could with difficulty keep up with; for I found I was following this mysterious being, without even interrogating myself as to the nature of the magnetic influence which drew me after him.

We reached his lodging a little before night-fall. The fire was extinguished, all but a few embers; his bed, (at the head of which was a rudely carved crucifix) was clean and made up; near it stood

a small table and a night-lamp, which, with sundry articles for domestic use, formed the whole of the chamber-furniture.

He locked the door, and seating himself on the bed, signified his wish that I should do the same. I complied, when the old man doffing his hat, yet maintaining his old position as at the shattered post, abruptly began:

"Thou art the first human being to whom I have opened my lips, since the siege of the Bastile; and art the last of the race shall hear the voice of one who has long been but a walking shadow on the face of the earth!"

The accents of the old man were plaintive; his voice was deep and hollow, but not loud, scarcely rising above a whisper; yet his articulation was singularly distinct, and the effect these few words produced upon me was unlike any thing I had ever before experienced. As he spoke, I could fancy the hollow tomb lifting up its voice, and revealing the "secrets of the world unknown."

I was on the point of making some observation in answer, but he motioned me into silence, and continued:

"I know thee not, yet art thou the man I will trust. My hours are numbered: my knell has tolled!"

Here he applied his thumb to a spring which forced open the top of his staff; extracting therefrom a diminutive strip of parchment he placed the same in my hand.

The parchment was old, and covered with written characters, to me incomprehensible; surrounded by them was the following inscription in black letter:

Alorsque les morts biensdront restrouber les morts, le glas des dis bans aura sonné.*

Without understanding how this prediction related to my host, I handed him back the scroll with an appearance of mystification not equivocal. He replaced the parchment, and hastened to relieve my very apparent embarrassment.

"That is my nativity!" said he. "The *dead have* come to the dead. 1830! 1789! My destiny is accomplished! Listen!

"My father was chaplain of the Bastile, in which he had been incarcerated for practising Legerdemain, Alchymy, and Astrology, and was appointed on the demise of his predecessor. My mother was a lady of rank, who being confined in the prison with her family, was removed by my father to a remote part of it, where she fell an unwilling victim to his incontinence. I was the fruit of that unholy amour. My mother sunk, ultimately, under the cruel treatment she experienced; her family was kept in ignorance of her fate. I was called after the tower in the dungeon of which I first drew breath—*La Tour du Puits.* When I was grown up, my father, whom as such I knew not until his death, procured my appointment as one of the *Porte-clefs* (turnkeys) of the Bastile, when a *sobriquet* was given me which I leave thee to discover. I was born in 1710, when my nativity was cast. On his death bed my father dis-

* When the dead shall come to the dead, the knell of the living shall have tolled.

Robert Cruikshank.

closed himself to me, and made me acquainted with my mysterious horoscope. None but our two selves ever knew the secret of my birth, the heritage of which was crime, infamy, and remorse.

"Many were the scenes of horror I witnessed; many too did I assist in perpetrating, for cruelty was one of the attributes of a turnkey. But the day of retribution came! The Bastile was taken and demolished; I escaped to this house, then inhabited by a fraternity of the sect of Loyola, where I lay concealed until the bloody scenes of the Reign of Terror were succeeded by the meteoric glory of the Republic, the Consulate, and the Empire. During my confinement, I made a vow never again to open my mouth to living soul until the day of my destiny arrived: I have *kept* my vow. I also swore to perform at least once every day, a pilgrimage to the Bastile, as penance for my atrocities. This duty have I religiously accomplished. Before I escaped, I contrived to conceal about me the whole of the proceeds of my extortions. These riches are bequeathed to the Church of St. Paul la Bastile, where those that died within the walls of the prison are interred. My necessities, although few, have considerably diminished my store, but enough yet remains to obtain masses for my soul. No one ever discovered I was rich, although my domicile has been often violated by police-spies and thieves; but neither ever found aught worth carrying away."

Here he again gave me a significant look and paused. I was unable to break silence, so totally was I absorbed in the old man's voluntary and extraordinary confession. In a few minutes he resumed the thread of his narrative:

"My mission is not yet fulfilled. I did not seek thee to communicate only these uninteresting particulars concerning myself. I had long sought one to whom I could cqnfide the unrevealed secrets of the Bastile: Fate threw thee in my way."

The old man raised the straw of his bed, and taking out a bundle of papers, handed it to me.

"Those documents," said he, "were compiled in my hours of solitude, when memory was sharpened by the smitings of conscience. By making their contents known, thou canst relieve my soul from some of its pain in purgatory. I intended sending thee that packet, and, unperceived by thee, once followed thee home, but my vow prevented me asking thy name. This day, my last upon earth, I watched thy return, or that packet would have fallen into the hands of those who first entered my chamber after my decease. I prefer delivering it to one who appears to feel an unbidden interest in me. All my other papers are there:" and he pointed to the embers on the hearth.

As I conveyed the packet into my pocket, I attempted to make some verbal promise of fulfilling the old man's last wish, but he prevented my intention by abruptly saying:

"Go now! Speak not, nor reveal aught thou hast heard, until I am no more. Speak not, I say; for it is also part of my vow not again to unclose my lips to man, after making myself known."

So saying he motioned me to the door, but notwithstanding my solicitations and entreaty, I was unable to extort another word. He even rudely closed the door in my face, leaving me to grope my way down the steep dark stairs.

Few were my dreams that night. Haunted by the remembrance of my singular adventure, I accomplished a slight perusal of the manuscript, and lay reflecting on the connection of the old man's destiny with the interment of the victims of July, until the morning sun warned me that I had stolen a march upon the next day.

My first visit, need I say so? was to the *Rue St. Antoine.* The old man was dead!

I discovered that after my departure he had again gone out, returning with an unknown aged ecclesiastic, who, after a short stay, left him at about half-past eleven, since which time all had remained quiet. Early that morning a fellow-lodger passing by, found his chamber-door ajar, and, prompted by curiosity, peeped in, and beheld the old man extended rigid on the bed.

I arrived as the authorities of the Quarter had assembled around the corpse, deliberating on the cause of his sudden death. Not a vestige remained of any document whereby his identity could be traced. Even the old fashioned staff had disappeared. On the table was a letter addressed: "A MONSIEUR, MONSIEUR LE CURÉ DE ST. JEAN LA BASTILLE," who, doubtless, in consequence of its purport, made the necessary arrangements for the interment, within the period prescribed by the French law.

LA TOUR DU PUITS, or THE TACITURN, lies interred in the parochial church of *St. Jean la Bastille.* No grave-stone marks his last resting-place, whilst the devotee, the idler, and the priest, trample over his remains, alike unconscious that they repose beneath their feet.

Whether the church above-mentioned ever derived any benefit from the old man's legacy, I am unable to state. It is however a well known fact, that about this time the devotees were one feast-day astounded by the appearance of a new silver *bénitier,* (holy-water bowl) most richly chased; although it was remarked that *Monsieur le Curé* never dipped his finger into it, without crossing himself thrice.

From the old man's manuscript, the CHRONICLES OF THE BASTILE have been compiled. Should any historical inaccuracies be found in them, let the censure, such errors deserve, fall, not upon the OLD MAN OF THE BASTILE, but upon

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON, January 1st, 1844.

CHRONICLES OF THE BASTILE.

THE BERTAUDIÈRE.

CHAPTER I.

A RELIC OF ANTIQUITY.

Reader! If acquainted with Paris, thou hast oft stayed awhile to consider the numerous relics of antiquity, which, at almost every turning, strike the eye of the stranger.

We necessarily speak not of the new quarters, in which it were a practical anachronism to seek antique remains; but refer to the ancient *ville de Paris* and its dependencies; the *Pré au Cleres*, now the site of the *Rue Jacob*; the *Rues St. Denis, St. Martin, du Temple, &c*; the environs of the *Louvre*; the Bridge of the *Tournelle*, the *Marais*, *&c.* where the enthusiastic admirer of antiquity may wander at will, until his passion is fed to satiety.

On the left bank of the Seine, at the top of a hillock lined on each side with tumble-down houses, stand the *Tour St Geneviève*, now incorporated in the *Collège Henri Quatre*; and opposite, the Church of *St. Etienne du Mont*, within which rest the ashes of *St. Geneviève* the patroness saint of Paris. Every year, her shrine is visited by hundreds of bare-footed pilgrims who come to lay their offerings at her feet, to burn a wax-taper at her altar, and to receive the priests' benediction. There is a record kept of the miracles she performed, which may be seen in the shape of sundry paintings on the wall, and of a pair of real crutches, said to have been left at her shrine by an old woman, who after having walked on them all her life, found them needless after performing the *neuvaine*.* But more of *St. Geneviève* another time.

* *Neuvaine*, signifies nine days; in this instance it is specially applied to a nine days' pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Geneviève which is to this day performed by the peasantry of the environs of Paris. It commences with the matin-bell of the first day of January, and ends with the vesper-bell of the ninth. A fair, for the sale of saint's relics, beads, rosaries, and such like, is held on the open square in front of the Church. Bare-footed pilgrims are not unfrequently seen performing the *neuvaine* within the aisles of the sacred edifice, and around the shrine of the Saint which is at this festival always in a blaze of wax-lights. It need not be added

In the *Rue St. Jacques* is all that remains of the Thermal Palace of the Emperor Julian; a little further on, the *Hôtel de Cluny* will arrest the notice of the passer by; then *St. Germain des Prés*, formerly connected with the *Palais des Thermes* by a spacious garden and a subterraneous passage; these monuments on the left bank first strike the eye, as peeping out from amidst the more modern masonry, they appear to court the stranger's eleemosynary of recognition.

On the right bank, the chaste *Tower of St. Jacques la Boucherie* and the simple church of *St. Gervais;* on the isle, the majestic Cathedral of *Notre Dame de Paris* surmounted by her two proud turrets; these, rising far above the surrounding tenements and buildings, assume over them the superiority of age over youth; like grey sires, contemplating in silence the degeneracy of their children.

With these the principal land-marks of by-gone days, others exist, not less remarkable, because less conspicuous, nor less worthy a moment's attention for having hitherto stood partially neglected—unobserved perhaps—or even unremembered. It is not however our intention to designate the precise spot where each may be found; let it suffice, that wheresoever they present themselves, they do so in a manner which establishes their claim to notice; abruptly recalling times that are no more, as sometimes an accident of life suddenly recalls a vision of the night.

Here an elaborate gothic turret, light, elegant and aërial, or an old buttress with quaintly fashioned conduits, will conjure up whole volumes of romance. There the solid, simple Norman arch or the carved Saxon portal, carry us back to the Gallic feudal-halls of wassail and murder, of chivalry and superstition. Here again a cornice or a frieze, peeps forth from a building half ancient, half modern, and one may fancy one's self a party to the voluptuous boudoir intrigues of a Francis the First or of a Henri Quatre.

To a house which common report attaches to the reign of the latter monarch, we now call thy attention, Reader!

On the left hand side of the *Rue St. Denis*, fronting the Market of the Innocents and almost immediately opposite the *Rue de la Ferronnerie*, stand the relics of a mansion, the real origin of which, to borrow a French metaphor, "is lost in the night of time."

Not that the house is really of fabulous parentage, but of birth so remote, that its mysterious genealogy is not to be unravelled by any hypothetical conjecture. *Fuit, est*, is all can be said of it. It has been traced back to *Henri Quatre*, who, according to report, caused it to be built for one of his mistresses. It is however indubitable, that both externally and internally, it was then very different, and this phase in its existence is perhaps the sole one calumny has not vilified.

It consists of four stories or flats, terminating in an angle at the summit; the windows, four on each story, were formerly latticed, but have been superseded by windows, "*à la guillotine;*" these

that on this occasion *Monsieur le Curé* and his bevy of attendant Priests, reap rich harvests from the credulous pilgrims, by enhancing the price of their dispensations and indulgences. In 1840, however, St. Geneviève was at a discount; the shrine of Napoleon being at a premium.

now black and dirty, are like the façade, ornamented with imitative roses and lilies in *relievo*; perhaps a compliment paid by the gallant imaginative architect, to the complexion of his regal employer's mistress. These again are diversified with fruits and flowers, from amongst which peep slily forth sundry diminutive faces, whose visual vagaries were probably intended as emblematical of the caprices of the child-god.

But as every one is as free as ourselves to form his own conjectures, we shall leave the curious and imaginative to form any allegory they please with regard to the house in question. Those who are fond of research into the mysteries of the foggy past, may perhaps obtain some clue towards developing the enigma connected with its origin. We wish them success, and that they may not, in the course of their inquiries, encounter a certain informant, whose impenetrability of skull, and obscurity of intellect, can be equalled only by the same attributes of that past, which they will attempt to fathom.

Let us also be permitted to observe silence relative to the numerous owners through whose hands this house has passed, until, oh degeneracy! it has become a receptacle for its present occupants: a vender of silks and worsteds on one side, and a maker of brooms and brushes on the other.

At the time our story commences, it formed the *Cabinet Noir* of Monsieur D'Argenson, Lieutenant of the Police of His Most Christian Majesty Louis the Fourteenth, being a dependency of the Hotel de Ville or Guildhall. The apartment in which he sat was spacious and lofty; the ceiling, of oak elaborately wrought into Gorgonic heads and mythologic figures, formed a dome, of which the supporters or ribs, also of oak, represented serpents issuing from wreaths of flowers, and leaves, merging into a large rosace in the centre; the carved oaken-panelled wainscot, although dilapidated, still offered ample evidence of past elegance; a portion of it, on each side of the fire-place, was partitioned off into closets let into the wall, the doors of which partially open, disclosed huge piles of grim and dusty papers, bound together with broad black ribbon. In guise of seats, several large chests were placed around the room, all of which contained similar piles of papers interspersed with ledger-looking books, closed by massive brazen clasps. The floor, once highly polished, was constructed of vandykes of oak-panelling, forming lozenges; two recesses reaching from the ceiling to the ground, contained each a window of corresponding dimensions, black with smoke and dust, and concealed by huge folds of drapery once of a deep purple colour, but now effectually screened from observation by a thick crust of cobweb, filth and flue. But one single chair—an oaken arm-chair with a high carved back, and ponderous legs terminated by lion-claws—graced the apartment, and in that sat D'Argenson, before a large table likewise of oak curiously fashioned, and covered with papers, books, and implements for writing. A huge pair of petronels, ready cocked, lay by his side, ready for either hand.

A wet cloak cast over the back of his chair and dragging on the ground, was reeking before the immense fire kindled on the hearth; whilst a broad brimmed bonnet, or slouch hat, such as is worn by the peasants of the Pyrenees, lay hissing in close proximity with the live embers. Over his head, from the rosace already mentioned, depended a common oil-lamp, which, casting out volumes of black smoke, thickened the close air of the room, and imparted a red glimmering tint to every object in it.

Immersed in his arm-chair, his head scarcely appearing above the level of the table, D'Argenson sat examining some letters, occasionally referring to one of the ledgers, and making annotations against the names of suspected citizens of the capital. It was eleven at night, an hour he devoted to the inspection of the reports of the secret police, and as necessity sometimes required, to giving audience to a special few of its worthy members. Ever and anon his dark grey eyes kindled with a demoniac expression of delight, as throwing aside a perused letter he marked out a new victim in his Book of Reports. The flickering light from the lamp over his head brought out the lines of his large high forehead, and of his repulsive features, and lent him that hideous look which had gained him amongst the people the nick-name of D'ARGENSON THE DAMNED; BLACK-WIG; JUDGE OF HELL; &c.

Contemporary writers differ in their accounts of the character of Monsieur D'Argenson. St. Simon mentions him most favorably, and from a scarce edition of his memoirs we quote the subjoined description of his person.

"His face was so frightful, it represented that of the three judges of hell; his stature was diminutive, although he possessed considerable bodily strength, which did him good service more than once in some serious street-riots, in which he always distinguished himself by his boldness and audacity. The most hardened trembled before him, as likewise the most innocent, and he had so regulated the immense multitude of Paris, that there was no inhabitant with whose conduct and whose habits, either by night or by day, he was not perfectly acquainted. The people feared him as children fear the devil."

The MS. of the Old Man of the Bastile, speaks thus of the same individual, with whom in his younger days he was personally acquainted, D'Argenson having died in 1721 after being three years Governor of the Bastile.

"He," (D'Argenson,) "was horrible to look at. His eyes were hard and piercing with a hyena-like expression. He had black tufted eye-brows which over-hung his eyes, like bushes over a pit. He was very short, with long arms and large bony hands; the latter hard and horny; his shoulders were very broad, and he possessed great muscular power. But his mind was more horrible than his person. Harsh, despotic and vindictive; cruel and determined in the accomplishment of his ends; of an avarice unconscious of limits; a confirmed debauchee, whose vitiated tastes led him

through every degree of infamy, he was withal keen and penetrating, and his judgment seldom at fault: intriguing and fruitful in expedient, his ready wit ever engendered the opportune means of withdrawing him from a dilemma. He was a compound of genius turned to evil: of contradictions ever apparently consistent: of wickedness ever ostensibly plausible: the curses of a thousand victims are heavy on his soul."

Such was D'Argenson! He was about terminating his nocturnal labours when his privacy was interrupted by a loud knock which immediately preceded the abrupt entry of a man whom he immediately addressed.

"So! so! sieur Jacques! Thou art acting the sluggard! *Ventre-bleu!* hast aught in thy budget?"

The new comer, apparently about thirty-years of age, stood upwards of six feet high. His broad shoulders and bull-neck, for he wore no neckerchief, indicated immense strength; whilst his meagreness was perhaps an evident proof that it was frequently called into exertion. His features, although hard and strongly marked, were not repulsive; and two coal black eyes shaded by tufts of as black hair in guise of brows, imparted to his face a certain sinister expression, which was not diminished by a thick pair of mustachios, twisted eye-wards into a peak, and a pair of black bushy whiskers. His hair was cropt close *à la malcontent,* (roundhead) a style admirably adapted for setting off his fine head and front, which bespoke an intelligence yet uncrushed by servility to the *noblesse;* his eyes flashed with the fire of independence, a sentiment little known in those days of despotism. His dress, that of an Auvergnat mountaineer, consisting of a close jerkin, with hose and gaiters of coarse dark grey cloth, was partially concealed beneath the folds of a huge cloak, (once a trooper's) carelessly cast half over one shoulder; his gait was military and imposing, losing nothing of its erectness as he deliberately answered.

"No news, Monseigneur! Nothing! But I'm no sluggard. There was nothing stirring, so I could'nt pick up any thing."

D'Argenson fixed his ferret-eyes on the spy, ejaculating as was his custom, sundry oaths and epithets expressive of dissatisfaction, in the midst of which he was interrupted by Jacques:

"Come, come, Monseigneur! Fortune will favour me perhaps another time. There was no news, although I kept both my ears and eyes open."

"*Ventre-bleu,*" bellowed out D'Argenson, "thou shalt soon have neither if thou comest often hither to open thy mouth only to ask for hire. If thou art too modest to claim thy deserts, thou shalt not find me slow to remember them."

"Monseigneur is *too* kind," retorted Jacques; "but if he would remember them only when they are payable in coin, I should owe Monseigneur one obligation the more."

The lieutenant's avarice was proverbial, and Jacques' knowledge of his failing produced this satirical retort. It caused a distortion of

the lieutenant's rigid features, who, handing the man a piece of gold, added by way of encouragement:

"Be as sharp upon others sieur Jacques, as thou art upon me, and *sang dieu*! thou shall have one of these every——" here he stopped short, probably fearing to commit some unpardonable indiscretion.

"Ah, Monseigneur!" remonstrated the spy, looking contemptuously upon the coin in his palm, "this is very little! very little indeed when you consider the rudeness of the trade."

"Thou art well paid, say! clown that thou art! *Morbleu!* must I give thee a gold Louis every time thou comest hither to whine about the rudeness of the trade? 'Tis downright robbery! But there! There's another! next time, come with something in thy mouth. Thou hast robbed me of two louis-d'or this night."

"And his Majesty's Treasury of four," ejaculated Jacques, half aside, as depositing the coins in his pocket, he made towards the door. Ere he reached it however he turned abruptly about, and exclaimed, whilst a scarcely perceptible smile came across his mouth: "I forgot, Monseigneur! I forgot to tell you! I have seen that Capuchin again!"

"Ah! where? where?" responded D'Argenson, his eyes kindling with sudden animation: "*tonnerre dieu*, where? Why didst thou not say so before? Come! out with it man, out with it I say, *sang dieu!*"

But Jacques' coolness appeared to increase in precisely the same ratio as his employer's warmth, for nothing moved by the hasty manner of D'Argenson, he paused a few moments before he answered him; then extending his hand, said in a sharp low tone:

"'Tis diamond cut diamond Monseigneur! My information is surely worth something!"

"The pillory—the prison—rascal, villain, robber!" screamed the lieutenant, enraged at being thus circumvented, "out of my sight! I'll not give thee another farthing: I have already paid thee!"

"For old work, Monseigneur! But as you please. The information may be acceptable in another quarter; yet for five louis you might know as much as I do:" and he laid peculiar stress upon the last words.

It may on first thought appear strange, Jacques being one of the secret-police spies, who were in the immediate pay of the Lieutenant, that the latter should not have forced his subordinate to comply with his demand, and to give him the intelligence he wanted. Jacques however was not one of those, who for a stated sum *per diem* divulged the affairs of individuals, into whose privacy they treacherously ingratiated themselves, for the express purpose of filling up the reports of the Lieutenant of Police with the details thus obtained; and of wresting the confidence of an unguarded moment, to the destruction or to the annoyance of their unsuspecting victims. These indeed deserved the epithet of *mouchard*, than which, even to the present day, there is no name more odious can be applied to a Frenchman. Jacques was not of these. Although belonging to the secret police, and sharing the odium attached to

the members of that body, he was master of his own time and person, not being compelled to go thither and any where, and upon any mission, according to the directions or the caprice of his employer. He received pay proportionate to the nature of the information he brought to Monsieur D'Argenson, and if he could at almost any time make his own terms with the latter, it was because the nature of his intelligence was ever such as the Lieutenant of the King most needed. This personage indeed had on sundry occasions been strongly tempted to exercise his immense power on Jacques, but although he found him irksome, he was too much a man of the world, and by far too selfish, to do away with a useful auxiliary for the sake of gratifying a personal pique. Besides, he reasoned that he was, and would remain in his power; so that when his services should not be needed, he could still disengage himself from him.

In the present instance Monsieur D'Argenson's irascibility completely obtained the mastery over his judgment. Jacques' hint served to open his eyes to the fault he had committed, and to the influence his menial could exercise over him. Ashamed of his weakness, eager to obtain the intelligence the spy evidently possessed, and still averse to let him perceive his object, for a few minutes the Lieutenant of Police remained absorbed in reflection. There was no alternative left but to accept Jacques' terms, a proceeding he at length decided on adopting in consequence of the insinuation thrown out, that the information would perhaps be acceptable in another quarter.

It is necessary here to state the reasons which gave rise to Monsieur D'Argenson's jealousy, lest other parties should obtain intelligence of affairs, strictly appertaining to his own department.

During the ministry of Monsieur de Pontchartrain, and of Monsieur de Caumartin, D'Argenson had not lacked patronage, which accounted for his having been raised, on the death of La Reynie, from the Lieutenant Generalship of the bailiwick of Angoulême, to the post of Lieutenant General of the Police; an office which placed in his hands a power and influence almost unlimited. The Minister Louvois, who died six years before D'Argenson's elevation, had been succeeded by Chamillart, and between these two personages, a private pique had a few years before engendered an animosity, which increased when the two rivals found themselves in a position to thwart the interests of the other. This animosity was prevented from breaking out openly, by the restraint which their respective positions imposed upon them; it was not however the less violent for being concealed, and even manifested itself in the reciprocal vigilance each exercised over the other.

Chamillart's jealousy led him to pay court to Madame de Maintenon, who now completely ruled the *Grand Monarque.* They two, were both striving to attain the accomplishment of a certain project that had long been uppermost in the breast of Scarron's widow, and which offered many obstacles, and required time, policy, and daring to surmount. As long then as Chamillart remained on

good terms with Madame de Maintenon, he feared nothing from D'Argenson, whom he thought anxious only for his downfall.

But D'Argenson, more politic than his rival, saw further into the future, and whilst he even neglected Madame de Maintenon, was assiduous in his endeavours to ingratiate himself into the favour of MONSEIGNEUR D' ORLEANS, who was likely to occupy, in the event of the Monarch's demise, the highest position in the government of the realm. The ambition of D'Argenson, equalled only by his avarice, grasped at the Comptroller-Generalship of the Finance, as well as at the retention of his present office, in which he was, as yet, almost a novice, it being only the third year of his ministry.

Caring little then for Chamillart's petty attempts to thwart his plans, he coolly laid the train which he well knew must ultimately explode, and whilst he lost no opportunity of strengthening his present interests, held a careful eye open to his future advancement. He acted up to the principle of never allowing a rival to obtain even a temporary advantage, for being, through the activity of his agents, always timely informed of the plans laid to counteract his efforts, his ready genius and decision were certain to assist him in turning the tables against his adversaries.

In the present case he felt the necessity of conciliating Jacques' confidence by agreeing to his terms, not so much perhaps for the sake of the information, (which he could probably obtain through some other channel,) as to prevent that information from first reaching the ears of Chamillart. Controlling the discontent expressed in his features, and as though ashamed of humbling himself before his inferior, he said to him, extenuatingly :

"Jacques! Jacques! Thou knowest well I abhor contradiction ; that it makes me rage, *ventre-bleu !* Thou art a good and worthy agent, or thy temerity should meet its recompense. I care not for thy price, so thou givest me the information thou keepest so close within thy teeth. Speak Jacques, speak first and then———"

Here he met the piercing eye of Jacques, which quailed not before his own stern, astute gaze. His right hand still extended, Jacques murmured : "Money down, Monseigneur."

D'Argenson reluctantly handed the agent the sum demanded, not without perceptible symptoms of distrust, growling out : "Be brief Jacques ; be brief ; *sang dieu !*"

The spy took the coins, deliberately examined each separately, and then depositing them safely in his pocket, began :—

"Well, Monseigneur! The Capuchin was close by the Convent of the Carmelites ; being marked, I was about concealing myself to ascertain his business. Before I could get well away he was upon me, and ere I recovered from my surprise, said to me — Sieur Jacques, thou art a knave, and so is thy employer! Tell him I come hither on the same errand as himself, and bid him take care how he cross my path."

"Insolent fool!" ejaculated D'Argenson. "Didst note him well, Jacques ?"

"Monseigneur, it is not often your Capuchin uncowls; least of all when he wishes to remain unknown. His cowl served him well on this occasion!"

"Didst not then see his face, Jacques? *ventre bleu.*"

"Nought but his hand, which held out to mine a golden louis, Monseigneur. 'Tis seldom your Capuchins are prodigal of their coin, although there never was gold better employed than this of the Capuchin's."

D'Argenson fixed his gaze upon Jacques whilst he was rendering his account, and exclaimed, as he ended:—

"The Capuchin did thee no wrong, Jacques, in calling thee knave! But no shaven crown shall beard the Lieutenant of the King, *tonnerre dieu!* Didst mark whither he went?"

"*Into* the convent, Sieur Lieutenant," responded the spy, "probably to administer spiritual consolation to the sisterhood; but Monseigneur's business there is temporal?" continued he inquisitively.

A flush deepened the yellowness of D'Argenson's face as he replied: "What avails it to thee, clown, my errand to the convent? But answer, didst watch the Capuchin out?"

"Monseigneur should know," observed Jacques, looking steadily into the Lieutenant's troubled face, "that the convent has more doors than one! Doubtless the Capuchin was as well informed as Monseigneur, for I did not see him again."

"Jacques," said D'Argenson after a moment's pause, "thou must see the face of this Capuchin. He is no shrive sinner, else should I know him."

"I am at Monseigneur's disposal," responded Jacques, "who shall have no reason to complain of my inactivity, if——"

"I understand thee," interrupted D'Argenson, "'tis gold thou would'st have, and gold thou *shalt* have when thou hast uncowled the Capuchin. If thou hast done prating, go; let me see thee when thou hast more to say, and less to ask."

Jacques drawing himself up to his full height, leisurely eyed the diminutive being before him, apparently moved by some sudden and indescribable feeling. The movement did not escape D'Argenson, who, quick as his suspicion, laid his right hand on the pistol by his side, as though afraid of some violence on the part of the spy. The latter however slowly bowed, and suddenly turning his back upon the Lieutenant, left the apartment as abruptly as he had entered it.

As Jacques disappeared, D'Argenson arose, his distended eyes fixed upon the scarcely closed door, as though yet unconscious of being alone. He then commenced a kind of oscillatory promenade, occasionally stopping short in the midst of it, and breaking forth into a monologue which betrayed the agitation of his mind, whilst his deep-set, grey eyes sparkled with malignity.

"Thou art no Capuchin!—Then to suspect my errand! Jacques thou art indeed a knave, but thou playest it against *me* to thy cost. Fool! Fool that I was to betray myself to him! But I will unravel this mystery myself.—Thou hast deceived me, Jacques! liar,

hypocrite that thou art, *sang dieu!* But we shall see! We shall see!" and he again threw himself into his arm chair.

Monsieur D'Argenson, with good reason, suspected the candour of his emissary. Too cunning not to be alive to every shade of deception, he found that Jacques' answers had been more evasive than he at first suspected, and that his own agent had craftily inveigled him into an avowal respecting his visits to the Convent of the Carmelites, the motives of which he had every reason for concealing. Jacques' tale, although plausible, and possibly true, might nevertheless be only an invention devised by its author for the purpose of eliciting from him, such an unwary acknowledgment as was calculated to serve the ends of his spy's intriguing spirit. Ever suspicious, (as are all dishonest men) he wrought himself up until his surmises assumed the character of truths, and until he fancied he could trace plots against himself, the accomplishment of which was to be effected by Jacques. He felt the necessity of monopolizing the agency of his subordinate, until, for his own personal safety, his removal became necessary; as this latter object could not yet be effected, either overtly or covertly, he determined upon sacrificing his pride and resentment to expediency, leaving to opportunity the working out of his vengeance.

Still, not Jacques alone formed the subject of his diabolical meditations; *his* agency was dangerous only so long as it should be directed; but he was not altogether fearless of Chamillart and of Madame de Maintenon. Here his knowledge of mankind came to his aid.

The reigning Monarch, who daily betrayed symptoms of declining health, now left the management of state affairs to those whom he paid for taking care of them. His sensuality had absorbed the energies for which his middle age had been so remarkable, and although sometimes a most despotic Sovereign, he was now more often ruled than ruling. Caring little for the private squabbles of his Ministers, so they broke not out in his presence, nor infringed the rules of etiquette, and aware of the animosity existing between Chamillart and D'Argenson, he with admirable tact always treated them as if they were upon the best of terms.

Since the death of Colbert, for whom he had felt great personal attachment, no functionary had been so greatly in favour with him as D'Argenson. Not that these two men were to be compared, but they were men who eminently suited him, or rather his temper of mind, which had changed with the growth of years. Colbert had administered to his greatness, when to be great was the Monarch's ruling passion. Colbert understood him then, as did D'Argenson at the present time, when by flattering Louis' foibles, and assisting him to the means of gratifying his passions, he gained his confidence; and it was upon this knowledge of the Monarch's essential failing, that D'Argenson built his golden hopes.

The chimes of the Church of St. Mery awakened him from his sombre dreams, and as he again paced the dreary chamber, his heart

grew big within him at the prospect his malignity had created of sating his ambition and his revenge.

Having with careful hand, collected the papers, letters, and books on the table, and placed them in one of the closets, he double-locked them all, and deposited the keys in one of the iron chests. Then trying each lock a second time to assure himself of its security, he muffled himself up in his damp cloak, and slouching his hat over his eyes left his bureau as St. Mery's chimed half-past twelve. Gliding through the back streets of the Rues St. Denis, St. Martin, and the Temple, he wended his way towards the Convent of the Sœurs de la Madelaine de Trainel, in the Rue Charonne, a short distance from the Bastile St. Antoine.

CHAPTER II.

EXEMPLIFIES THE FRENCH PROVERB:—"'TIS NOT THE HABIT MAKES THE MONK."

Perhaps nothing on earth affords greater evidence of the operation of Time, than the gradual increase of a large city. A resident perceives not the change a few years effect, for much the same reason that parents detect not the growth of their offspring, nor relatives, the gradual decay of their kindred, so readily as one, who after an estrangement of some years from his native land, returns to find kindred, relatives, friends, all altered—and himself forgotten. The chubby-faced boy is grown up into the comely youth; the smiling infant girl, into the blooming maiden, merging into womanhood; and the slight-made lass, with whom he used to flirt, is become a healthy, obese matron, dispensing cuffs and boxes amongst a noisy brood of humanity in miniature. He strolls into the church-yard; his eyes grow dim with tears as he reads the inscription on the recent tombs. Memory hurries him back to the days of his youth, when seated by the fire-side of those for whom he weeps, he laughed at their merry songs and jokes. He approaches a mourning group around a new-made grave; with uncovered head he listens to the solemn ritual, and whilst stifled sobs escape from the muffled mourners and break the melancholy silence, leans forward to gaze upon the coffin, now being lowered into the earth. It contains the remains of an old school-fellow, with whom he once exchanged vows of friendship. He rushes from the spot: he reconnoitres the city of his birth. Here the change is so great, he almost doubts the evidence of his senses. Long streets now stand, which but a few years back were green lanes lined with the bushy quick-set and holly. The fields waving with ripe corn have disappeared, and lordly mansions arisen in their stead. The old pond is now a verdant lawn, besprinkled with flowers, and surrounded by a modern square. The

antique parish church has been pulled down, and its place supplied by a modern gothic structure: all this, the change of a few years!

But more rapid than its decay of age, is the growth of the modern masonry of a city. Towards the close of the 17th century, the date of our tale, the scene of the incidents related in this chapter, was altogether so different from the same spot at this day, it is not possible to recognize it for the same. The prolongation of its streets into *faubourgs*, and the consequent removal of its barriers, have constituted the Paris of that period, the Paris of the present, *minus* a considerable portion of its ancient filth and ruggedness. The Revolution too has effaced many a hallowed spot, and visited some of the *quartiers** with a double portion of its vengeance; perhaps none more so than those where a religious house was known to exist. It was in the neighbourhood of the Convent of the Carmelites, that the following events took place, on the evening before the interview of Jacques with Monsieur D'Argenson.

At the top of the *Rue d'Enfer*, opposite the spot which the Royal Observatory now occupies, and adjoining the garden wall of the Convent of the *Grande Chartreuse*, although detached from it, stood a small house, before which paced an individual whom the Reader will probably recognize.

The *Rue d'Enfer* was at this period scarcely a suburb of the *grande ville*. It consisted of a few houses irregularly built, and sprinkled here and there amongst gardens and horse-chesnut trees; the more civilized end clinging with tenacity to the giant city. To the left rose the stately dome of the newly erected *Val-de-Grâce*, dedicated with its adjoining convent by the mother of the reigning monarch, to *Notre Dame de la Créche*; (our lady of the manger,) to the right, the blooming, half cultivated gardens of the LUXEMBOURG; and opposite again, was the Convent of the Carmelites.

It was a spot, the solitude of which was often relieved by the solemn chaunt of the Sisters of the neighbouring cloister, whose rich voices pealing on the ear from amidst green trees and lively meadows, and wafted on the cool perfumed breeze of the evening, struck the soul with a delectable sentiment of unearthiness, leaving it entranced with delight. Sometimes the same strains sported through the air in the calm intervals of the storm, or were borne along with the thunder-clap, when the way-farer would stop, devoutly cross himself, ejaculating an *Ave-Maria*, and pass on.

A few years have effected a mighty change! Houses and tenements for the great million of the city have sprung up, where formerly the feathered tribe mated and warbled away their cheery

* Paris is divided into twelve Arrondissements or Wards, each under the jurisdiction of a local Mayor, who, with his colleagues are all amenable to the Prefect of the Seine. Each *arrondissement* is also sometimes styled a quartier; (quarter) that part of it situated at the end of any great street, and prolonging the same to a Barrier is called a Faubourg; (false-burg) these are the *civil* divisions of the city inter-muros: the parishes, (paroisses) are strictly ecclesiastical.

existence; and lofty mansions have taken root where but lately stood the haughty poplar, the deep-rooted beech, the teil and the elm. The Val-de-Grâce no longer resounds with voices, save those of sick or dying soldiers; the gardens of the Luxembourg reach almost to the barrier, and those of La Grande Chartreuse have become the country ball-room of the students and grisettes of the *Quartier Latin*;* its walls still besprinkled with the heroic blood of the unfortunate and murdered Ney.†

Before the house already mentioned, paced an individual whose presence there was calculated to attract notice, on account of the lateness of the hour. He was enveloped in a frock and cowl of brown serge, the latter appendage covering his head so as entirely to conceal his features. He was above the middle height, and judging by the amplitude of his raiment, strongly built; his gait was firm, and he strode backwards and forwards in front of the house, with the military stateliness and measured step of a sentinel on duty. If his dress bespoke him to be a member of the ecclesiastical body, it was not long ere he gave signs that his inward man possessed not that particular virtue which ought to be the consolation of the worthy functionaries of Religion, under "long suffering;" whilst certain anxious glances in the direction of the latticed window over-against him, indicated that in spite of his habit, he had not yet renounced "the sinful lusts of the flesh."

To add to his discomfort, the night was cold and misty, and so dark withal, proximate objects were scarcely perceptible. His pendulum-like promenade had already lasted an hour, when the *Bourdon* (Tom Bell) of Notre Dame boomed midnight, and he exclaimed:

"Then he has not been here to night! Curses on those who warned him!"

* The *Quartier Latin, or Latin Quarter*, is the Students' Sanctum Sanctorum, and is in the immediate neighbourhood of the Sorbonne, the Royal Colleges, and the Schools of Medicine and Jurisprudence. These young gentlemen of the University formerly possessed exclusive privileges, which they enforced in spite of parliamentary decrees and royal edicts. The *Pré au Clercs*, or Clerk's Mead, was a close field on the banks of the Seine behind the Tower of Nesle, where they fought their duels and settled their disputes after their own fashion, and according to their own law. Within the limits of the *Pays des Etudians*, (Students' country) the authority of the Provosts of Paris was set at defiance, and once within the Sanctuary of St. Jacques or the University, the person of a delinquent became inviolate, not only by right, but likewise, because no functionary was to be found rash enough to attempt a capture within its precincts. Many curious details connected with the privileges of the Students in "days of eld," may be found in an ancient MS. now in the Library of St. Geneviève, adjoining the Royal College of Henry the Fourth.

† After traversing the garden of the Palace of the Luxembourg, and the iron gates at the end, going towards the Royal Observatory on the left hand side, runs a dead wall enclosing a garden, the summer resort of dancing students and grisettes. With his back towards this wall the unfortunate Ney was placed and shot: his body was taken into the Val de Grâce, and laid out by the Sisters of Charity. It is a spot not often visited by strangers, the French being disinclined to indicate it.

His soliloquy was interrupted by a noise at the casement, which made him start involuntarily; he hastened to conceal himself beneath the low balcony; the casement slowly opening, two female voices were heard conversing in a half-whisper.

"Indeed, Julie! Thou wrongest him. True the night is cold and damp, but was not that night colder on which he waded the Erdre that he might share thy company earlier? Something hath detained him."

"I should believe thee, Jeanne, for thy words are the echo of my heart's wish that it were so!"

"Fie! Fie! dear Julie! Thou dost not doubt him?"

"Doubt him? Nay! but he never failed before, and thou knowest not, good Jeanne, what it is to—to expect—and to be disappointed! And I feel so strangely sad—I fancy a thousand unaccountable things."—

"Ah well!" sighed Jeanne, "they say love maketh the heart tremble—but sister, I do think it maketh thy knees tremble too! Art cold? Let us in!"

"Oh no! 'Tis nothing! only a shudder; the air will revive me! There! I feel better now!" Here she paused, heaved a sigh, and continued:—"I wish, dear Jeanne, that the day were come! Dost not thou?"

"Can'st ask me sister Julie? I do wish it, and I do not; for we then must part, and no longer love each other as we do now."

"Wicked minx! Wilt thou not still be my own dear Jeanne? and who knows but thou may'st be betrothed too, and perhaps ere long? What hast thou done with the ring he gave me?"

"I have it on my finger! And remember, sister Julie, thou hast lost thy wager, for it fits me perfectly, and thou did'st say thy hand was less than mine! I will keep it on, and show it to thy lover, to punish thy vanity."

"No! No! Jeanne! Return it I beseech thee. It bodes me ill that thou should'st"—

"Hush!" interrupted Jeanne. "I hear a noise beneath us! Hark!" and stepping out on the balcony she peeped over and perceived the Capuchin! "Back! back, sister Julie!" she exclaimed in a half whisper; "Here is thy runaway listening to our idle tongues, like a spy of Monsieur D'Argenson! But I'll teach him better manners, and scold him for teazing thee."

So saying she gently pushed her sister back into the apartment, following her in, and half closing the casement.

The Capuchin, although immediately beneath the balcony, had not heard more than the name of D'Argenson, and a few broken sentences, of which his utmost ingenuity could not connect the sense. But the name of the King's Lieutenant, mentioned by damsels, one of whom had evidently been expecting a lover, roused his jealous ire, and led him to believe the truth of the reports which raised D'Argenson's name for success in gallantry, to most notorious

celebrity. Whatever his emotions however, he mastered them sufficiently to check the loud utterance of the curses he heaped upon him, and unconscious of having been perceived, emerged from his hiding-place as Jeanne closed the casement.

"Tired of waiting, eh?" said he to himself; "let us see whether thy ears are as quick as thy suspicions;" and catching up a handful of small gravel, he cast it up at the window. This signal however produced no answer until it had been thrice repeated, when the voice of Jeanne was heard through the half-closed casement:—

"Be not afraid, sister mine; 'tis only some drunken roister who mistakes our house for a cabaret. I'll see, and speak to him; may be he will go his way at the bidding of a gentlewoman;" and she stepped out upon the balcony. "Eh! what! a Capuchin! Fie on thy intemperance, thou man of holiness; thou hast kept late companionship with the wine-bibbers, and lookest up for the wine-bush instead of turning thine eyes to the Virgin for forgiveness.—Get thee gone, and disturb not the midnight sleep of weary damsels."

"Thou mistakest my errand, fair one," responded the Capuchin in a whisper, the better to disguise his voice; "but to please thee, I'll say I sought the wine-bush, but found the Virgin in its place; *ave Maria!*"—

"Tush! tush! and keep thy *aves* for the cloister; thy devotion is thrown away, for thy Saint is not merciful to-night, and bids thee away to thy couch."

"Would that 'twere blest with thee," replied the Capuchin aloud, as with a spring he attained the cornice of the balcony, and seized the hand of the affrighted Jeanne, ere she was aware of the movement, or had time to retire.

Making a violent effort to disengage her hand and to retreat into the apartment, she exclaimed: "Back, sister Julie! 'Tis not he; 'tis some miscreant who hath taken unworthy advantage of our loneliness. Gracious Heaven! I cannot get my hand away;" but with another struggle she succeeded in effecting her object, and sprung back into the chamber, immediately fastening the espagnolette to prevent the intrusion of the stranger.

Julie, half unconscious of her own movements, had, on hearing Jeanne's warning, retreated into the furthermost corner of the apartment, where she sunk, half dead with consternation, into an easy chair. Her sister soon joined her, and they both remained petrified with terror, until the receding steps of their unexpected visitor, resounding over the pavement, brought back the blood into their cheek.

Their first impulse was to throw themselves into each other's arms; a flood of tears relieved their oppression, and Julie began:

"Poor dear chick! Thy teeth chatter with cold and fear; but there is no danger now; he is gone, the monster?"

"And thou, sister, tremblest too! It was my imprudence that well nigh cost us so dearly!"

"'Twas for me thou did'st risk thee on the balcony, good Jeanne; but then who would have thought——"

She was interrupted by a faint scream from her sister, who again bursting into tears, sobbed out, "Forgive me, sister Julie, forgive me! 'Twas not my fault—but—but—he has taken it away,"—and she held out her right hand, on which no longer shone the ring of her sister's betrothed.

"Merciful heavens! what a misfortune!" exclaimed the weeping Julie! "I told thee it boded no good! But I will tell him how it happened, and he will believe me; I know he will! There, there! dear sister; dry thy tears;" here she kissed her fondly on her eyes, "I will not see thee weep!"

Jeanne in turn embraced Julie, and led her away into an inner apartment, whence she shortly returned; having again examined the casement, and listened at it attentively for a few minutes, she withdrew into her sister's chamber.

Embarrassed by his frock, the Capuchin had not been able to advance further than the outer cornice of the balcony, where his unsafe footing perhaps proved the best defence of Jeanne. In disengaging herself from his relaxed grasp, she caused him to lose his balance, and but for the firm hold he kept with his left hand, of the front bar of the balcony, he would have fallen to the ground During the short interval of the struggle, he had obtained a glimpse of her features, on which the night-lamp, in the inner chamber, cast its dull light, and perceiving by the touch, the ring on her finger, contrived to draw it off, in the hopes of one day having an opportunity of returning it, or of making it serve as an instrument to accomplish the design he had conceived.

"Curses on the cowl, and on all who wear it," muttered he; "but for this infernal petticoat, I had obtained entry to the chamber of the fairest maiden of this fair city. Thanks however to my address," he continued, as he again touched *terra-firma*, "I possess a token; and if I turn it not to account against that same fair maiden, I renounce gallantry for ever. Cursed D'Argenson! I will still be in thy path;" and bounding over the rugged stones, he was soon out of the *Rue d'Enfer*.

Rapidly descending the steep *Rue de la Harpe*, he gained the *Rue Dauphine* and the *Pont-Neuf*, where he stayed awhile to breathe; withdrawing from his bosom a silken purse, he carefully deposited therein the ring he had so surreptitiously obtained, then adjusted his cowl, which the wind had displaced, and at a rapid pace, set off again in the direction of the *Louvre*. But ere he had got over the bridge, an individual darted out from the door-way of one of the cabins or stalls with which it was covered at that period, and standing in his path, exclaimed, whilst as he directed the point of a small-sword towards his breast—"Thy purse."

Taken by surprise, the Capuchin retreated a few paces, but sud-

denly stopping short in his backward movement, drew himself up, and with a degree of firmness which surprised his assailant, answered—

"Thou shalt not have it, brigand!" then rapidly disengaging a sword from beneath the folds of his garment, he closed with his adversary.

The struggle was not of long duration; his weapon snapped in twain, and the point of his opponent's was already close to his breast, when a third individual created a sudden diversion in his favour.

Pouncing upon his aggressor from behind, and pinioning his arms, he exclaimed—"Fly Sieur Capuchin! Fly! The road is clear!" advice the individual thus addressed, was not slow to follow; in a few minutes he was out of sight. Dashing his captive to the ground, the stranger caught up the remnants of the Capuchin's sword, and disappeared after him.

Recovered from his astonishment and consternation, at this unexpected attack, the discomfited aggressor looked about for the man who had so roughly assailed him; he was no where to be seen.

"Cursedly unlucky, that interference," exclaimed he, "and a most ugly fall." Here he rubbed his limbs with unequivocal symptoms of pain. "*Peste* upon the scoundrel's charity! A moment longer, and he might have cried halves with me, for your Capuchin's doublet is always well lined; I had to learn, they know how to defend it."

Ending his soliloquy as he adjusted his vestments, and sheathed his sword, he was about leaving the spot, when he made a sudden plunge at some object on the ground:

"By Jupiter! Not such a bad affair after all. The bird has flown, but left his best feathers behind! The prize is mine, at the cost of a few bruises instead of a few inches of Toledo." So saying, he thrust his booty into his doublet, and walked leisurely on, until he arrived at a house, situated at the corner of the Rue Traversière: giving a loud knock at the door, he was instantly admitted by a livery servant, who saluted him respectfully as he passed. Without throwing off his cloak, he mounted a well-polished flight of stairs, and unceremoniously entered a large room, occupied by a company of young men, who on perceiving him, sent up a shout of welcome.

"Here's St. Marcel at last, my boys; an hour behind time," said he, who officiated at the head of a well-furnished supper-table. "Come! a bumper to his arrival. I warrant he has been out on some love freak, and preferred letting a good supper cool, rather than his mistress."

A general laugh duly honoured this sally; a faint smile illuminated the visage of St. Marcel, whose appearance denoted him to be any thing but a midnight robber.

He was about the middle height; rather too thick-set to be accounted elegant. His face, manly and not unpleasing, would have been even handsome, except for its disfigurement by debauch. A

keen, dark eye glanced from beneath a pair of thick, arched eyebrows; and jet-black mustaches, which he constantly twisted upwards, imparted a character of ferocity to his countenance, that it did not naturally possess. His garments, though somewhat soiled, were of the newest cut; he wore a large cloak, thrown carelessly over the left shoulder; his three-cornered laced hat was cocked so as to allow a profusion of well powdered locks to fall upon the collar of his coat; a lace frill and ruffles, a small sword, in a highly polished steel scabbard tipped with silver, buff boots, coming half way up a pair of well turned muscular legs, and falling over them, calf high, with tight buckskin hose, completed his costume.

Throwing off his hat and cloak, he bowed to the principal personage, and seating himself in the vacant place pre-assigned to him, swallowed the contents of a huge goblet; this feat performed, he replenished his exhausted lungs, and exclaimed:

"By my soul, my lads, you are all out. Something better detained me!"

"Bravo! Bravo! Out with it!" responded from every side.

"The best adventure in the world," continued he, helping himself plentifully to a goose-liver pasty; "the most piquant adventure possible. What think ye all of St. Marcel turning cut-purse?"

"Ah! ah! ah!" re-echoed the jovial company.

"We shall have thee turn Jesuit next," observed he at the head of the table: "the proverb says, that when the devil grows old, he turns monk!"

"No! no!" retorted St. Marcel, "but I gave one such a fright to night, as will serve him 'stead of penance for twenty pecadilloes. On my way hither, the devil crossed my path in the form of a Capuchin friar, laden, as I guessed, with Peter's pence. A humourous idea flashed across my brain, and there is its fruit," and he dashed the Capuchin's purse upon the table. "You are the cause of this, ye blood-suckers," continued he, addressing the company, "for ye drained my exchequer last night to the uttermost farthing."

The room pealed with hearty laughter, as he recounted the details of his adventure. Even the glasses appeared to share the general mirth, for they clattered on the board, as though their very sides were shaken with the convulsiveness of risibility.

The President, infringing the rules of decorum, laughed in his glass, nor ceased until he had tittered down three goblets of Burgundy, and filled a fourth against the next emergency. At length, finding breath, he ejaculated. "Ouf! the frolicksome scamp. And yet I can't conceive—; the Capuchin was armed said'st thou, St. Marcel?"

"Yes! and I do think I should have been forced to prick him," retorted St. Marcel, "only my friend behind saved me the trouble; although, to be sure, it cost me a bruise or two."

"I doubt he was some masquer, thy Capuchin," observed a second speaker to the left of the President; "'*tis* carnival time, and be sure

thy holy man was as great a sinner as thyself, Marcel, or my name is not my sire's."

"Likely enough," responded the hero, "but that is no fault of thine;" this sally produced another roar, in which all joined except him at whose expense the hit was made. The President had recourse to his glass of reserve, and did not recover his equanimity, until he had drained it to the bottom.

"Come!" continued St. Marcel; "let us make merry; and after supper try fortune for the contents of the Capuchin's purse."

The repast was now speedily brought to a close, fresh wine ordered up, and the dice began rattling on the board.

The company consisted of ten individuals, belonging to the elegant *noblesse* of France, and were attired in the becoming military garb of the Musketeers of the King. It would be unnecessary to describe each guest individually; he, however, who officiated as President, ought to be mentioned.

He was short and squat, of a rubicund visage, with a jovial good-natured countenance, spoiled by an unsightly scar over the left eye, which made him keep it constantly half-closed. His hair, Danish red, was crisp and curly, and grew high off a manly, open brow. By a singular contrast, his eyes, or rather his eye and a half, were coal black, tiny and sparkling, and their expression, joined to the effect of a face closely shaven, except on the upper lip and chin, where grew a pair of immense mustaches, and a pointed patch of hair, known by the name of *royale*, gave a peculiar, and rather repugnant appearance to a physiognomy which had not one repulsive feature in it. His short, powerful frame was encased in a coat of fine, blue kerseymere turned up with silver lace, open from the throat to the waist, displaying a *jabot*, or dickey of Valenciennes lace. The collar was of red, Genoa velvet, as were the wide cuffs, and bordered with silver lace an inch and a half broad. White kerseymere hose, jack-boots, with long silver spurs, and a small sword of great length, completed his accoutrements.

Like most of his company and companions, he was what is called a fast liver, although not so fast a one, as some of these. Compelled to keep up the dignity of his rank, which was nothing less than Commandant of the *Grand Monarque's* Body-guard, or *Gardes du Corps*, he thought it not beneath his said dignity, to turn his private dwelling into a house of entertainment for the convenience of his brother-officers and inferiors. From the profits of their extravagances, he managed to add something to the small, daily pay of his grateful Sovereign, and at the same time to grow obese upon the good things of this life; it is scarcely necessary to state that of these, he alone paid no share, although to him came the lion's part.

Besides this advantage, not an inconsiderable one, considering the expertness of his mandibles, he was a very fortunate, or what amounted to the same, a very expert thrower, seldom failing to pocket a good sum from the many which in the course of one night often changed owners; it was however a remarkable circumstance,

that once the said monies were safely lodged in his capacious pocket, they evinced a most extraordinary tenacity to remain there.

"Now, Commandant Schwillwein!" roared out St. Marcel; "as soon as you have made acquaintance with the bottom of that goblet, I'll throw you for twenty louis; and," continued he, addressing the company, "Ill stake five to one that I fleece *saur-kraut*."

This familiar language from St. Marcel to his commander did not surprise, for at the bacchanals of this period, etiquette was seldom observed; military precedence being acknowledged only in public. The sole, unpermitted licence was that of theeing and thouing a superior.

The Commandant kept his eye and a half fixed upon the speaker from behind his goblet; having discussed which, he answered:

"I have already won so much of thine own money, St. Marcel, I shall feel no compunction in lightening thee of a little of that which is not rightly thine. Come! Here is for the first throw;" and taking up the dice he rattled them in the cup.

"Never mind that;" retorted St. Marcel, his companions looking on with eagerness; "never mind first throw! Let it be yours; I am anxious to know Dame Fortune's humour to-night. Come! once decides it. Who bets with me? Five to one I win!"

The stakes were hazarded by three or four of the group, upon the strength of St. Marcel's usual ill-luck: the Commandant again rattled the dice and prepared to throw.

"Down with them!" cried out half a dozen voices; "down with them Commandant."

"Two fives and a six!" shouted Schwillwein, uncovering the dice, and slapping his thigh with ecstasy: "two fives and a six! Thy Capuchin brings thee ill luck, St. Marcel, my boy!" and he tossed off a bumper in a fit of laughter.

"Not so fast," replied the latter, throwing down the yet uncovered dice upon the table. "Who doubles his stake?"

"I! I! I!" exclaimed as many voices, as their owners, depositing the gold on the board, bent forward with intense anxiety to ascertain the result of St. Marcel's throw.

"Commandant!" said he; "Triple your stake, and bet against me! Two fives and a six! You know the chances are in your favour."

"A bet! A bet!" responded the Commandant, and staked the sum.

"Two sixes and a five, Commandant!" shouted St. Marcel, sweeping up the golden treasure. "Who tries again?"

Schwillwein, a man of great prudence in this kind of dilemma, half moodily declined entering the lists against so formidable an antagonist. Not so the members of the company, some of whom however soon discovered to their cost, that "Fortune was to them unkind."

"'Tis of no use," sullenly observed he who had thrown last; "'tis of no use! St. Marcel is in the winning vein, or else the devil's luck

is lodged at the bottom of the Capuchin's purse. If you will be advised by me, my friends, you will not care trying to coax it out."

At these words, a new comer who had entered unperceived, suddenly started, and thus drew upon him the distracted attention of the revellers.

"St. Leu! Whence comest thou?" asked he who first perceived him. "How long hast been here?"

"I have come off guard at the Thuileries," replied St. Leu; "where I took the place of a comrade who fell suddenly sick this evening. I arrived here just before that unlucky throw of De Pontois! It appears the luck is all on one side to-night!" continued he, holding out a hand to St. Marcel. "Well! 'tis not often Fortune and thou are in conjunction!"

"I drink to thine against his," roared out the Commandant; "try a main, and I'll take the odds!"

St. Leu observed silence for a few moments amidst the loud entreaties of his friends. At length he said:

"Commandant! You know I never play. I cannot afford to support the reputation of a gamester."

"Never mind! Try thy luck, my boy," retorted the Commandant; "I will stake for thee, taking the odds in thy favour."

During this short colloquy, St. Marcel had been busily engaged examining the contents of the Capuchin's purse. He had perceived the ring, and was coolly and attentively scrutinizing its form and quality by the light of the bougie, when St. Leu caught sight of the small but sparkling diamond which embellished it. He turned pale, and tremblingly approaching St. Marcel, exclaimed in a troubled hurried voice.

"Whence had'st thou that ring?"

St. Marcel turned about to look at his interrogator, and perceiving who he was, replied with a laugh:

"Why St. Leu! Thou art as pale as the Capuchin himself! What interest takest thou in this ring?"

"Whence holdest thou it?" again demanded St. Leu, audibly enough, and in a tone sufficiently peremptory to cause a dead silence. "Tell me, or by heaven——"

"What?" retorted St. Marcel; "What, if I will not tell thee? Suppose some fair damsel——"

"Thou liest! Traitor, villain, coward!" roared St. Leu! "She never gave thee that ring!" and in an instant his sword was unsheathed.

An exclamation of astonishment burst from every lip!

"Thou must have satisfaction," said the Commandant to St. Marcel, who, quick as his adversary, had drawn his weapon, and now stood upon the defensive. "The lie! and to thy face; thou must have satisfaction; so please gentlemen to give the young bloods room;" and he pushed his guests away right and left, drew the table out of the way with his own hands, and drank off a bumper—all with the coolness of an old practitioner.

A space being thus cleared, the opponents crossed swords. Both were in reality equally expert, but St. Leu was under the influence of some fixed idea which troubled his eye and unnerved his arm, and ere he had exchanged a few passes, his adversary's steel had traversed his body. Staggering back he exclaimed in a faint voice:

"Marcel! Marcel! Tell me! Did she give it thee?"

"She? Who? No!" replied he; "but thy rashness forestalled my candour, or——"

"Thank heaven," cried St. Leu, "I am happy!" and he sunk back upon the ground.

CHAPTER III.

COMMANDANT SCHWILLWEIN DISPLAYS HIS LOGIC. A FEMALE ACQUAINTANCE OF HIS INTRODUCED.

St. Leu was no sooner wounded than the young men crowded around him, each eager to render what service was in his power. One brought a decanter of water—a liquid seldom patronized by the Commandant's guests; some rent their handkerchiefs into lint, whilst three or four were anxiously employed unfastening his habiliments.

One of these, and he the most assiduous, was St. Marcel, who as soon as his adversary fell, rushed to his aid, hastily pushing away the anxious group that was forming round their wounded comrade. It was he first unhooked his vest, and examined the puncture made by his own weapon. It had pierced the breast obliquely, the thrust having been diverted by a small gold locket which depended from his neck by a silken ribbon. St. Marcel removed the trinket, and discovered on one side, the miniature of a young and beautiful female. Although much moved by this discovery, from the connection he fancied it to have with the mysterious ring, he concealed his emotion, and raising the head of the sufferer upon his left shoulder, attempted to revive him.

"Air! Give him air!" cried he, making a motion with his hand for the crowd to disperse—"more air—and somebody go for the surgeon."

These events occupied but a very few minutes, during which time no one had thought of the Commandant, until he recalled himself into notice. This worthy individual, whose continual libations appeared to produce but one effect, that of increasing his inclination to continue them, was discussing the remains of a well filled goblet, when St. Marcel's voice struck his ear.

"The surgeon," he exclaimed: "the surgeon! Who talks of the

surgeon! A surgeon is useful enough to crop a limb for which a man has no further use; but I'll have no surgeon here for the prick of a sword." So saying he rang a small hand bell which was speedily answered. "Tell Dame Dorothy to come hither," continued he; "and tell her to make haste."

Now this last admonition was perfectly useless, Dame Dorothy never having been known to make haste in her life. Although attached to Commandant Schwillwein, no one had ever clearly ascertained in what particular capacity. It was she saw that every thing went on in order in the house; that set it to rights and kept things in their place; prepared the feasts; mended the linen; in a word, took care of his establishment, and had often hinted a remote desire to take care of the Commandant. He however always declined this affectionate offer, on the plea of being, as yet, perfectly able to discharge that important duty himself. But if she experienced slight and disappointment in this particular, she made herself ample amends by heaping a double share of care upon her own person.

She regarded the Commandant as a man of more than mortal mould, never disputing his behests, either directly or indirectly, but on the other hand, expecting from others, the same implicit obedience and deference towards herself. As parsimonious of words as prodigal of action, if a servant did wrong, she set him aright; if he went wrong a second time, she set him aright again; if he proved obstinate, and offended a third time, she at once renounced the possibility of enlightening the opaque being of whose domestic education she was so solicitous, and forthwith provided herself with a more pliant and tractable help. By the prosecution of this system of domestic economy, Dame Dorothy had brought her household establishment into so complete a state of obedience and clock-like order, that the movements of that complicated machine could not in point of regularity be brought into comparison with those of which she was the main-spring.

Although known as having always formed part and parcel of the Commandant's worldly effects, commonly designated as baggage, it would have been a complex paradox to determine the precise period when she first condescended to be included in this particular category of his moveables. Some went so far as to affirm her to be his spouse; others, less charitable, said no less, but left an aspersion upon her immaculateness, by questioning the definite degree of countenance given to the connection by the Church.

Of whatever nature the affinity, relationship or *liaison* between them, it was clear to all, that they two alone were acquainted with the secret.

And here may we be allowed to ask why the world is so very inquisitive into individual privacy whenever there exists a motive for not divesting it of its sacred character? It may be laid down as an axiom, which will be found correct in nine cases out of ten, that the component members of which the world aforesaid is made

up, are more particularly addicted to the promulgation of slander and to the multiplication of evil reports, than to the opposite virtue; nor is this truth ever more self-evident than when female honour is called into question.

Now every body pretended to know something, or had something to say about the Commandant and Dame Dorothy, but strange to add, although every tale differed, the general conclusion was the same; she was "no better than she should be."

Alas! How few attain even the positive degree in the scale of moral worth!

However, the truth of that popular adage, "people will talk," appeared so incontrovertible both to Dame Dorothy and to the Commandant, they had never thought worth while attempting to prevent so very wayward and indefinite a portion of the community from following its inclination.

In due time, that is, as soon as possible, Dame Dorothy answered the summons from the saloon, and appeared at the door with as small a degree of discomposure as might be expected in a matron suddenly exposed to the *feu de file* of twenty-two eyes of sundry colour and expression, belonging to exactly half that number of owners of the masculine gender. Perhaps this extraordinary equanimity in her may be explained by the simple, but unobserved fact, that she beheld only the tenth portion, (*minus* a bit,) of the said number of male eyes, which compound fraction of the great integer was peering intently into her very soul, from behind a goblet of remarkable dimensions, the said fraction gradually assuming a devotional direction which by a remarkable coincidence became common also to the goblet.

Dame Dorothy appeared rather above the middle age, a period in female life which has never yet been precisely expressed in figures, although a person thus defined is generally understood to be neither young nor old; and with this definition, the outward person of this respectable specimen of the feminine gender, exactly corresponded. There was nothing remarkable either in her dress or in herself, except her eyes, which were of a clear, whitish blue, expressive of nothing so much as of the melancholy of that most melancholy of fishes,—the cod.

The matron saw at a glance what particular attribute of her ministry was in requisition, a remarkable proof of the sharpness of her perceptive faculties, and advanced to the spot where St. Leu was extended, his head still reclining on St. Marcel's shoulder; she was closely followed up by the Commandant, who really felt an interest in St. Leu's fate.

The Dame knelt beside the wounded man, and tested the artery at the wrist. She next bared his breast a little more, placing the middle finger of her left hand on the wound. After a few moments of profound attention, the Commandant exclaimed:

"Dead! Dorothy?"

"No!" responded she.

"Dangerous?" continued the noble Schwillwein, inquisitively.

"Yes!" re-echoed the sententious Dorothy, making a sign with her hand for the company to withdraw, as assisted by St. Marcel she placed St. Leu in a less inconvenient position, and proceeded to operate upon him, with the lint and its etceteras.

"Gentlemen!" said Schwillwein, hemming; "it was necessary, for the honour of this, His Most Christian Majesty's Royal Corps of Musketeers, that the Sieur St. Marcel le Trouvé, should obtain satisfaction for the insult put upon him by the Sieur St. Leu; but, you are all aware, that H. M. C. Majesty has formally and expressly prohibited duelling?"

"Yes! Yes!" responded the company.

"And that any person, or persons"—the last word in the plural was emphatical—"convicted of infringing this law;" continued he, draining a goblet, and bestowing a peculiarly suggestive glance upon his subordinates—

"Yes! yes, Commandant! We understand;" responded they.

"Then, gentlemen; I need not explain;" retorted he of the eye and a half. "But," added he; by way of self-extenuation for the part he had played in this drama; "although the honour of this Royal Corps, is something, gentlemen;" (the something was emphatical also) "His Majesty's ordonnance is likewise something; therefore, they ought both to be duly honoured; and whoso honours the Royal ordonnance, honours H. M. C. Majesty himself, and every thing belonging to him."

Warmed by excess of zeal in upholding H. M. C. M. and every thing belonging to him, the Commandant honoured the last opinion in a bumper of wine, the numerical order of which was problematical, but which he probably considered as belonging especially to himself. He then resumed the thread of his argument, his gestures assuming, as he gradually became more animated, a character savouring less of the orator than of the warrior; consisting chiefly, of a cut-and-thrust motion of the right hand, "through the midway air."

"Well, gentlemen; whoso does this, honours his Royal Corps of Musketeers; and, I say," here he made a desperate lunge, "that an insult put upon any of you, *individually*, is an insult put upon *it*, collectively! eh, hem! Gentlemen!" the orator now became solemn; "a circumstance of this nature has occurred this evening; and the party insulted, had a right to demand satisfaction, in the name of the whole corps. This has he done, and our honour is satisfied."

Here he slapped his large chest with tremendous energy, and lubricated his husky throat with a zest not less tremendous.

"Gentlemen! We now come to the most important point of this question. We have honoured H. M. C. Majesty's Royal Corps of Musketeers; but not his royal ordonnance, as was our duty; that is, no—it is our duty to honour it, but was not in this instance—and why?" here the eye and a half sparkled triumphantly; "and why? I repeat! Because, gentlemen; it was our duty to honour H. M. C. Majesty's Royal Corps of Musketeers first!"

"Bravo! Commandant; bravo!" responded the members of the

said royal corps, in hearty approval of a theory which so well accorded with their practice. Indeed, to the anticipated moral of this lecture, was mainly due the attention they paid to their superior officer, whom they heard to the end without betraying the remotest symptom of impatience; a feature in their conduct exceedingly uncommon, and determined by the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed.

What the Commandant asserted of His Most Christian Majesty, was strictly correct. Duelling had of late years increased to so alarming an extent, that scarcely a day passed without several victims falling a sacrifice to this very chivalric but not equally christian-like custom. A word, a look, the remotest hint, often sufficed to determine broils, the sanguinary issue of which, plunged whole families into grief and mourning; and the recurrence of similar scenes of slaughter became the more frequent, that the small sword was a necessary appendage to the dress of a gentleman, and the wielding of it an art in which excellence constituted no remarkable accomplishment; so generally expert were the *escrimeurs* of that age, comprising individuals appertaining to every class of the community.

Were it here the place, much might be written on the subject of duelling, and on the light in which society regards the non-conformists to a certain code of honour, enacting the forfeiture of that brightest attribute of man, if he refuse to expose his life, to the bullet, or to the sword, of any *man of honour* who chooses to call him out. That the chances are seldom, indeed never equal, is a truism. One man may be a very good shot, or an expert swordsman, yet, notoriously depraved; the other, enjoy an unsullied reputation, as a man, but, possess neither the eye nor the skill of his opponent. Thus, one individual risks his life and reputation against those of a man, who perhaps has not the latter to lose, and whose life is probably of consequence to no one but himself; if even he come off unharmed, his honour is not a whit the brighter, whilst his character, heretofore unstained, may by this *act of honour* become tarnished by the crime of homicide.

These arguments are perhaps not new; neither will they be to the advocates of the system, more conclusive against it, than many, and better, which have before been adduced. Moreover; they will not be found to comprise the series of cases in which a man's honour may be attainted, his credit impeached, his veracity called into question, without his reputation being really injured: against *his* character, men of sense will ever weigh that of the detracter, ere they allow the balance to preponderate to the prejudice of the vilified party. Again; those exquisite shades will be found wanting, which, *men of honour* assert, distinguish honour from dishonour, but which are so difficult to define, that notwithstanding the affirmed distinction, it were impossible to point out where honour begins, and where dishonour ends. These observations, however, tend to prove this theory tenable; viz. that *true honour* knows no medium between right and wrong; whereas, its opposite, or *that* honour certain men call such, is so susceptible, that in attempting to establish the precise line of demarcation between them, they confound the two; or so infringe

upon the attributes of the one, that it assumes the characteristics of the other.

When Louis Quatorze prohibited the murderous custom of duelling, it had become an evil of the state, which daily deprived it of its best blood; and to so alarming an extent, had this political disease encroached upon its health, that the Monarch determined upon eradicating it. How far success crowned his efforts, may be inferred from Voltaire's assertion, that in his time, "duels had become a hundred times less frequent, than in that of Louis the Thirteenth."*

Amongst the many penalties enacted by the *Grand Monarque*, against delinquents, imprisonment in the Bastile was one, resorted to, in aggravated cases; whilst deprivation of civil rights for life, or for a limited number of years, according to circumstances; forfeiture of rank, or suspension from military grade; and temporary or permanent banishment, were the customary punishments consequent to ordinary cases; thus, it was not surprising the Commandant's guests so readily comprehended the hint conveyed by the eloquent twinkle of his eye and a half, which so suddenly formed the climax of his exordium.

But, although impressed with a very high and definite notion of the deference due to all the members, individually, of the Royal Corps of Musketeers, he was also perfectly aware, that should it be discovered any of the said worthy members had infringed the severe laws enacted against duelling, the delinquents themselves and their accomplices, with the aiders and abettors in the commission of the offence, would be rigorously dealt with. As Commandant of the said royal corps, he could expect no clemency, being by his rank bound to set a worthy example of discipline to his subordinates, in discouraging their bellique ebullitions. He was, however, a soldier at heart; bred moreover in the principles of the duelling school; and to the prejudices of his education rather than to a contempt of the laws, might be attributed the issue of the sudden quarrel between St. Marcel and St. Leu, both of whom would on a word from him have let his sword sleep in its sheath. Now, that the mischief was done, it behoved him for his own safety, to take such measures, as should effectually screen the principals from the punishment imminent to a discovery, and also protect the aiders and abettors in the delinquency, of which he had himself been prime mover. In order to this, he commenced the above eloquent and logical discourse, intending it to act as a padlock upon the tongue of the parties, the keeping of which closely fastened was not less a matter of general than of personal interest.

* "The abolition of duelling," writes Voltaire, "was one of the greatest services rendered the country. Formerly, these combats had been authorized even by the Parliaments, and by the Church, but, although prohibited since Henri Quatre, this fatal custom was practised more than ever. The celebrated combat *de la Frette*, of four against four, in 1663, was the cause of Louis the Fourteenth's determination not to pardon any longer. His happy severity by degrees corrected our nation, and even the neighbouring people, who conformed to our wise customs after having adopted our bad ones."

He had attained the very apex of his oratory, when he gave utterance to the last phrase. His "*and why?*" was perfectly Demosthenic, and possessed the extra merit of being *extempore;* thus wound up to the summit of eloquence, he again replenished his goblet; saying, ere he effected its disappearance:

"The honour of the corps first; after that——H. M. C. Majesty s ordonnance!" but it remained doubtful whether the last remark was intended for a *sentiment,* or merely the fag end of a short soliloquy.

His mission however was not yet fulfilled. The two principals in this affair embarrassed him; but so numerous are the resources of a fertile genius, that an expedient at once suggested itself, and the Commandant had not sooner conceived his idea than he put it into execution.

"Sieur St. Marcel le Trouvé!" said he, clearing his throat upon the hemming principle; "the occurrence of this evening places me under the painful necessity of requesting you to deliver up your sword. You will consider yourself under arrest for the next week, during which time you will please to deprive us of the pleasure of your company!"

"Commandant;" answered St. Marcel, "I am your's very obediently. My sword lies in yon corner. Pray where am to I enjoy my solitude?"

"In your own apartment, Sieur St. Marcel, where—"

"Commandant;" interrupted the latter, "you would highly favour me, by permitting me to remain a prisoner here, in your house, to tend St. Leu in the capacity of nurse; Madame Dorothy will of course wear the gorget."

"Thou art a good comrade;" responded the melting Schwillwein, "and knowing how to kill, would'st learn how to cure, eh? Remain, and welcome; and" added he in a low tone, "*do* enjoy thyself." Then raising his voice, he addressed his guests. "Gentlemen, I think it will be prudent for you to,—eh, hem!"—here the eye and a half twinkled outrageously, and travelled in the direction of the door.

His guests taking the hint, departed forthwith, saluting the Commandant, and tending a hand to St. Marcel: the latter, and Dame Dorothy, joined by Schwillwein, now directed their whole attention to St. Leu, who gave symptoms of returning consciousness.

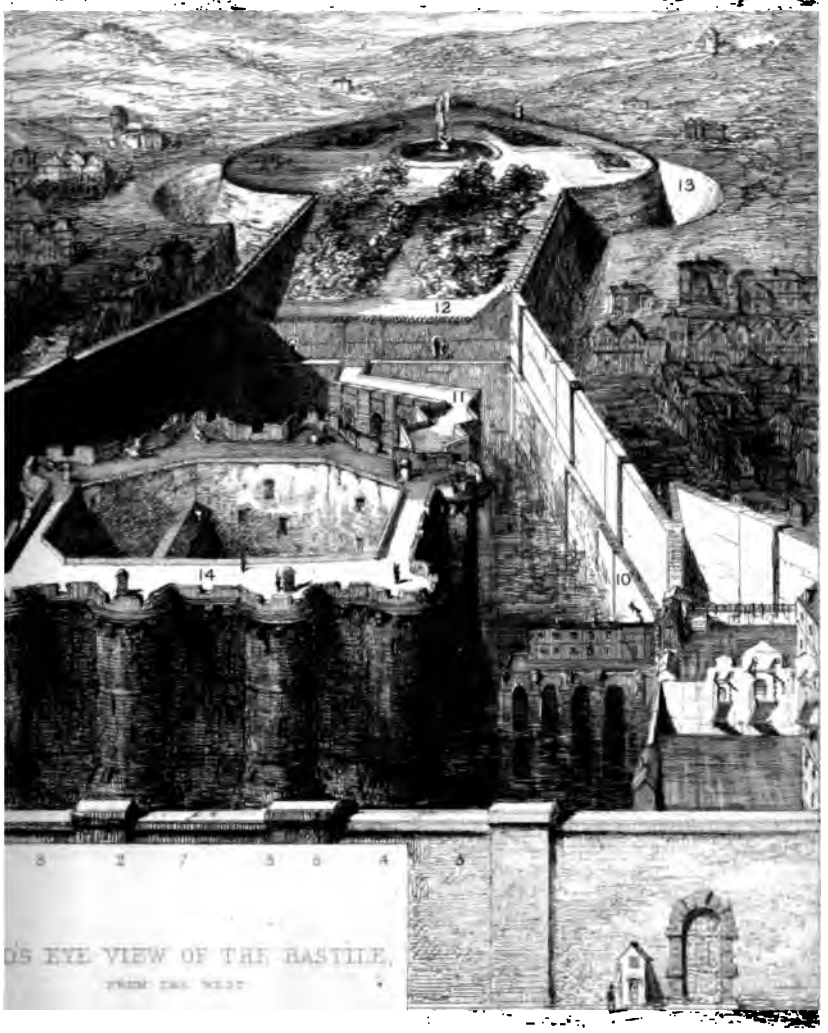
CHAPTER IV.

THE BASTILE ST. ANTOINE.

WHO, that goes to Paris, seeks not the BASTILE, almost ere he think of visiting any other spot? for who has not heard of it by name?

On reaching the ground *pointed out as its site,** the stranger beholds,

* Although the column of July is indicated as standing on the site of the Bastile, it is, in point of fact, erected on that of the bastion. The main body of the edifice stood nearly one hundred and fifty feet to the westward of it, or Rue St. Antoine side. The mamelon of the bastion, was in a direct line with the



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE BASTILLE,

not a dark prison, surrounded by walls, ditches, and the usual apparatus of defence; but an open space, in the midst of which rises a lofty elegant column, dedicated to the manes of the Sons of Liberty!

Here stood the Bastile!

More than half a century has elapsed, since its sombre mass chilled the hearts of the gay multitude of Paris; none of whom ever passed it without a shudder, nor heard its name whispered without fear; or if they spoke of it, it was with a feeling of awe, like that which overpowers the mind, at the mention of some dark deed of horror!

The Bastile is no more! The plough-share hath rooted up its deep foundations; the hand of man hath not left one stone upon another, to prate of its where-about!

Nearly five centuries have faded, since the first stone of the *Bastile St. Antoine* was laid! But how different the Paris of the nineteenth century from the Paris of the fourteenth! No magnificent Boulevards graced the city at that period, for those Boulevards served as its defence. The long faubourgs existed not, even in name; whilst the *Portes St. Honorè, St. Denis, St. Martin,* and *St. Antoine,* which yet retain their ancient appellation, denoted the extreme limits of the city of Paris in 1356!

According to Dulaure,* it was at this period, and within one month after the memorable battle of Poictiers, "that, by the orders of Etienne Marcel, Provost of the merchants, measures were taken to fortify the city of Paris against the English. A wall of circumvallation, or *enceinte continue* was constructed, from the Tour de Billy,† to the extremity of the Rue St. Antoine, where a gate was erected

corner of the Rue du Faubourg St. Antoine, as it *now* exists, and its precise position would be determined by a right line drawn from the middle of the parapet of the bridge over the Canal de l' Ourcq, across the Place de la Bastile, to where the canal emerges, near the *greniers d' abondance.* The modern *Boulevard Bourdon,* on that side nearest the Rue St. Antoine, is constructed on the site of the Bastile itself, including a part of the great ditch. Again; a line drawn from the corner of the Rue St. Antoine as it now stands, would intersect the site of the two towers of the Bastile called the *Tour du Puits* and the *Tour du Coin;* a diagonal, projected from the opposite angle of the *Place Royale,* would have bisected the whole fortress into two acute angled triangles, one comprising the four towers which overlooked Paris westward; the second, the four which fronted the Faubourg St. Antoine; thus, the *Tour du Coin* would be in a right line with the corner of the Boulevard, which abuts into the Rue St. Antoine.

The Porte St. Antoine—that is, the one built after the completion of the Bastile—was situated at the extremity of the Rue St. Antoine, where it now intersects the northern end of the Boulevard, and abutted where at present stands the house in the Rue du Faubourg St. Antoine, known as the *Maison Pepin.* It is an oil and colour warehouse, painted in harlequin shades from top to bottom. The late owner attained to most unenviable notoriety, by his participation in the diabolical Fieschi conspiracy.

* *Dulaure's Histoire physique morale et civile de Paris.*

† The *Tour du Billy* was situated on the left bank of the Seine, behind the Convent of the Celestines, at the furthermost angle of the arsenal; on the site of the gardens of which, now stand the Granaries of Reserve, or *Greniers d' abondance.* It was encompassed by a boulevard, and a ditch twenty-five feet wide. On the 19th of July 1424, it accidentally took fire and blew up; nothing but the bare walls remained standing.

fortified by towers, which, in 1369, Charles the Fifth considerably augmented, and formed of it a fortress, calling it the BASTILE ST. ANTOINE." Historians, however, differ in precising the date of its erection, and appear to waver between the years 1356 and 1371.

Dulaure's account of its origin is partially confirmed by Piganiol de la Force. "According to some," says this historian, in his *Description des Antiquities de la Ville de Paris;* " this château was built in 1371, in the reign of Charles the Fifth, and Hughes Aubriot laid the first stone. But several historians, *worthy of faith*, affirm, that in the reign of King John the father of Charles the Fifth, Etienne Marcel, Provost of the merchants of Paris, having taken refuge in the Bastile *which he had built*, and where he fancied himself in safety, was there taken and killed; thus, *Charles the Fifth only augmented it.*"

This latter fact is likewise consigned in an ancient manuscript entitled: *La Vie de Charles le Quint de France;* now in the Mazarine Library, and contains the following statement:

" *At first*, the Bastile consisted of only two isolated towers, one on each side the road entering Paris. *Some years after*, two others were erected opposite the first, being still separated by the main-road."

Piganiol de la Force, also quotes the above fact, and incorporates it with others, in his article on the Bastile: he says:

"The ancient entry into Paris was through a gate, with a drawbridge and portcullis flanked by two stone towers, with embrasures—*c'étoit une manière de châtelet bastillé.** This was the *commencement* of the fortress which, *afterwards*, was called the Bastile St. Antoine."

Christine de Pisan† states, that: "On the 22nd of April 1370, Hughes Aubriot, Provost of the merchants, *laid the first stone of the Bastile;* he being charged with the construction of *it*, and of the fortifications around Paris.‡

The authority of this fair historian, is of weight, as a contemporary with Hughes Aubriot; her statement, however, does not disprove the prior existence of the two towers erected by Etienne

* A kind of small castle, with bastiles.

† Christine de Pisan a native of Venice, was born in 1363. She came to Paris, with her mother and father, in 1368, on the appointment of the latter, to the post of Astronomer and Astrologer to Charles the Fifth. She married very young, and was early left a widow, at which period the king extended his royal bounty to her, by the settlement of an annual pension of two hundred crowns. Her works are numerous, but the greater portion have never been printed. There is no record of her death; in 1411, she was still alive.

‡ This Hughes Aubriot was a native of Burgundy, of low extraction, a relative of Jean Aubriot of Dijon, Bishop of Châlons from 1342 to 1350. Besides completing the Bastile, he built the Petit Châtelet, the Grand Pont, since called the Pont au Change, and the Pont St. Michel. Having opposed the establishment of the University of Paris, effected during his Provost-ship, both the University and the Clergy united in persecuting him; the former for opposing its establishment, the latter for irreligion; Aubriot being a great favourer of the Jews. He was tried by the Bishop of Paris for the latter crime, and condemned to perform penance in front of Notre Dame, and to pass the remainder of his life at the bottom of a ditch, with only bread and water for sustenance. At about the same period, 1381, he fell under the animosity of the House of Orleans, he being a partisan of that of Burgundy, and was imprisoned in the Bastile he had built. He was subsequently transferred to the prison of the Bishopric of Paris, whence he was delivered by the rebels called "*Maillotins.*" Taking advantage of his liberty, he fled into Burgundy, and there died.

Marcel. She wrote some years subsequent to the completion of the structure, and after the term Bastile was attached to it, to distinguish it from the *Portes Bastillées* of St. Denis, St. Martin, &c.: she therefore understood it only in its *present* acceptation.

In his *Histoire et Recherches des Antiquitez de la Ville de Paris*; Sauval thus speaks of the foundation of *the* Bastile: "It was commenced in 1369, and the first stone laid by Hughes Aubriot, (Provost of the merchants of Paris) at the expense of Charles the Fifth.

The remarks made above, relative to Christine de Pisan's account, apply to that of Sauval, who wrote only at the commencement of the last century.

In the *Histoire des Prevôts des Marchands de Paris*, Etienne Marcel is mentioned as flying from his pursuers: "who sorely pressing him, he sought refuge in *one of the great stone towers* which *flanked the gate of the city*, towards the *Rue St. Antoine.*" This occurred in the reign of King John, father of Charles the Fifth; it is thus indubitable, and the fact is confirmed, both by Dulaure and Piganiol de la Force, that in the reign of the above monarch, a gate existed, called the Porte St. Antoine, simultaneously with two *stone towers* raised for its defence; one on each side of the said gate: and this formed the ancient entry into Paris.

In the succeeding reign, that of Charles the Fifth, two more stone towers were erected, *parallel* to the two first, and intended to serve as a retreat to the garrison of the outer edifice; thus, the entry into Paris was prolonged between four stone towers, connected only by the gate of the city, called the Porte St. Antoine.

In this reign the term *Bastile* was first applied to this redoubtable fortress, even whilst *incomplete:* a consequence of the form of the building; which, in keeping with its Latin appellative, consisted of towers with embrasures. Nor was this cognomen peculiar to *it* alone; subsequently, the *Portes St. Honorè, St. Denis, St. Martin, &c.*, were all fortified in a similar manner, and also called Bastiles: when these were pulled down as useless for defences, that of St. Antoine was left standing, and on account of its greater magnitude and strength, amply replaced them as prisons. It may with truth be said of *it*, that within its walls were concentrated the crimes of all the others.

That the records of the time should adduce the fact of Etienne Marcel taking refuge in *the Bastile* proves it to have been the *first edifice of the kind* elevated; although, as shown above, the name soon became common to all structures of a similar form.

According to Piganiol de la Force and other historians, "worthy of faith," the Bastile served as a *refuge* almost as soon as built, but was not, until 1381, converted to the uses of a prison; Hughes Aubriot, having been incarcerated therein, by the partisans of the House of Orleans, and by the ecclesiastical authorities of Paris.

The next period in the existence of the Bastile, brings us to the reign of Charles the Sixth, under whose directions it was completed as it stood for upwards of a century and a half.

Piganiol de la Force affirms, that: "in 1383, he, (Charles the Sixth) added the remaining towers, placing them equi-distant, uniting them

by a wall of equal thickness with the towers themselves, surrounded by a ditch twenty-five feet deep, and one hundred and twenty feet wide, and turned the main-road to the left. The whole then comprised eight round towers, joined together by walls of solid masonry, nine feet thick."

Thus, seventeen years before the close of the fourteenth century, the Bastile, properly so called, was completed.

Its form, at the above period (1383) was : "*une manière de forteresse antique, composée de huit grosses tours rondes jointes l'une à l'autre, par des massifs qui ont les mêmes dimensions*;*—an isolated prison—frowning alike on the mailed stranger without, and on the peaceful citizen within—ready to entomb the living victims of despotism, or to conceal its crimes—it stood—the palace of vengeance—the grave—alike of crime and of innocence."

As a consequence of its completion, the ancient gate of the city was walled up; the old draw-bridge cut away; the portcullis dropped, and the cavity itself filled with huge stones. A new gate, still retaining the name of its prototype, was erected to the left of the old one—that is, of the Bastile, whilst the main-road into the city was made to diverge from its ancient direction through the four primitive towers of the château, and to pass through the new Porte St. Antoine.

Besides the chambers which at this period existed in the towers, others—cells, they might have been called—were now built in the thickness of the walls themselves, to serve as receptacles for prisoners of state. The chief of these were allotted to the use of the governor and his suite, of his subordinates, and of the garrison: a council-chamber, a vestibule leading thereto, and a small recess called the *pillon* or pillage-store, were the only *official apartments* of the Bastile, from 1383 to 1761.

Exteriorly, however, this was not the Bastile of 1789.

Speaking of the augmentation of this fortress, and of the extension of the fortifications around Paris, Piganiol de la Force says: "The modern additions to the Bastile, were commenced on the 11th of August 1553, and were terminated in 1559. They consisted of a curtain, flanked by a bastion surrounded by a deep ditch, with cone-shaped bottom. Parallel with it was a second curtain and demi-bastion, with a similar ditch; but these formed a part of the *enceinte* of Paris, and were thrown up on the outer side of the Porte St. Antoine, to which they belonged.

The communication between the Bastile and its bastion, (situated on that side of Paris nearest the Faubourg St. Antoine), was established by a standing bridge (*pont dormant*) built over the great ditch, the foot abutting on the middle of the bastion.

It does not appear, that after this period (1559), the exterior approaches to the Bastile experienced any modification, although the fortifying of the city of Paris was prosecuted even to the year 1634, when more boulevards or bulwarks were raised (called the *boulevards exte-*

* A kind of antique fortress, composed of eight, great, round towers, joined one to the other by massive walls of the same dimensions.

rieurs) and ditches sunk to surround them; a few years before the taking of the Bastile, the former were levelled and the latter filled up.

Prior to 1761 a bird's eye view of the Bastile, *inter muros* from one of the towers, would have comprised an unbroken parallelogram, bounded by eight massive towers connected by walls of equal thickness; but after the above period, it would have been seen divided into two oblong courts; the larger bounded by six towers, with their connecting masonry; the smaller, by the remaining two, with their component walls, and a handsome edifice, which, in the reign of Louis the Fifteenth (during the ministry of Phelypeaud de St. Florentin,) Monsieur de Sartignes, Lieutenant of Police, constructed, across the open space between the *Tour de la Chapelle* and the *Tour de la Liberté.*

The dependencies of the Bastile, consisted of the Governor's house, with the ordinary appendages, viz.: kitchens, pantries, coach-house and stables &c. &c. Besides these, there were barracks for the garrison, lodgings for the staff, and the several guard-houses, called Corps-de-gardes: these, however, except the latter, were all comparatively modern buildings, as there is no account of them prior to 1634. It is, notwithstanding, more than probable, that as, from time to time, the garrison was augmented, and the number of prisoners increased, it became necessary for the Governor and his household, each in turn to vacate their apartments *within* the Bastile, and to locate in the out-houses erected specially for their accommodation; thus, these were multiplied, as necessity required, until, from within the entrance of the outer wall, the approaches to the Bastile, were, to a certain extent, blocked up by them.

This far-famed fortress or prison, was situated near the Arsenal, on the left bank of the Seine, *ascending* the river; four of the towers overlooked Paris, and four, the Faubourg St. Antoine; two of them obliquely; the former were the *Tour du Puits*, the *Tour de la Liberté*, the *Tour de la Bertaudière*, and the *Tour de la Bazinière*; the latter, the *Tour de la Comté*, the *Tour du Trésor*, the *Tour de la Chapelle*, and the *Tour du Coin*. The Tour du Puits stood over against the angle of the *Rue des Tournelles*, on the side nearest the Rue St. Antoine; the *Tour du Trésor*, opposite the Faubourg St. Antoine.

The most ancient were, indubitably, the *Tour de la Chapelle* (Tower of the Chapel), so styled because of the place of worship originally existing within, and the *Tour du Trésor* (Tower of the Treasure); the latter, however was not distinguished by this title, until the reign of Henri Quatre, whose Minister, Sully, herein deposited the treasure he had brought with him to Paris, for his royal master. Between these, existed the ancient gate of the city, which, with its portcullis, was still to be seen in 1789, as also part of the drawbridge.

The next in seniority, were those first raised by Hughes Aubriot, viz: the *Tour de la Liberté*, (Tower of Liberty!) and the *Tour de la Bertaudière*: the others, viz. the *Tour du Puits*, (Tower of the Well) so called because of the well adjoining it; the *Tour du Coin*, (Tower of the Corner) because of its position; the *Tour de la Bazinière*, (after Monsieur de la Bazinière, who was confined in it,) and the *Tour de la Comté*, were erected within a very short period after.

That these towers should be distinguished, each by a name, suggested either by its position, or by its connection with its wretched inmate, appears plausible; thus; why the Bertaudière Tower, the Bazinière Tower, or the Tower of the Corner, &c. were so styled will be readily conceived; but why another of them should, as by a species of mockery, be called the Tower of Liberty, defeats the utmost ingenuity to discover. Was it not a refinement of cruelty —a refinement of the tortures of solitary confinement for life, to designate by the title of the Tower of Liberty, a dungeon whose every stone belied the illusory epithet?

The Reader has now been brought down to the latest period of the history of the construction of the Bastile, and its dependencies. We will, next, introduce him within its hated walls.

But it is necessary to premise, that the events, embodied in these pages, occurred prior to the erection of the great *modern* building which divided the great court of the Bastile into two smaller ones, as also of most of the dependencies which he will recognize on entering, after crossing the first draw-bridge.

To the right of the extremity of the Rue St. Antoine, was the entrance to the Bastile. It consisted of a large gate, covered with iron nails, lined within, with plates of the same metal. Outside, to the left, stood an advanced guard-house, where a sentinel was posted, day and night, whose duty consisted in pushing away the curious who either approached too near, or staid to examine the exterior. Both the gate and the guard-houses were built in the wall which surrounded the ditches of the Bastile, and which was sixty feet high from the level of the street, and seventy-five from that of the level of the great ditch.

This first gate, opened inwards into a small court called the *Cour d'Entrée*, or entry-court, and was flanked by two more guard-houses, where two sentinels constantly mounted guard, whose office was to answer, and to open the door. This first court was likewise called the *Cour de l'Orme* or Court of the Elm, from a large elm which grew in the middle of it but was subsequently cut down for timber to build the barracks. Within the Entry Court, or Court of the Elm, (which communicated with the arsenal, by a long avenue,) stood the barracks for the Invalids forming the garrison, the Governor's coach houses, and the stables. Above the gate itself, the two guard-houses forming the basement, a capacious chamber served as a dépôt for all kinds of arms, and contained, besides, some very ancient suits of armour, made of costly metal, richly ornamented with precious stones.*

After crossing the first outer court, the visiter's further progress was obstructed by a ditch, about twelve feet wide, communicating at one end with the Seine, and at the other, with the great ditch of the Bastile. On the further bank of this ditch was a second large gate, having on each side a smaller one, called a portillo; these, like

* At one period, this dépôt contained 40,000 muskets, of which, during the war, 20,000 were sent to America; 19,400 were deposited in the *Invalides*, and the remainder, with the armour above mentioned, disappeared at the sack of the Bastile. (*Bastille Devoilée.*)

the first, were strengthened inside and out with iron-plates, and from them, over the ditch, fell a triple draw-bridge. After traversing this draw-bridge, immediately within the second gate, were two other guard-houses, each having a sentinel. These defended the second outer court, called the *Cour de l'Hôtel du Gouvernement* the *Cour du Gouvernement*, or the Court of Government. To the right of this court, which was considerably larger than the first, (and opposite an avenue ninety feet long,) stood the Governor's house, a handsome modern erection; and to the right of it again another commodious building, also modern, part of which served as a kitchen, the other as a bath-room for the use of the Governor's wife. Thus, the Governor's house was separated from the main body of the Bastile itself, by the avenue already mentioned. and by the great ditch. Over the latter was built a standing bridge, or *pont-dormant;* at its foot stood the kitchen, &c. as stated above. This bridge did not, however, extend entirely across the ditch, to the great gates of the prison; to attain these, it was first necessary to cross a ponderous double-draw-bridge, supported by massive chains, that was lowered every morning to establish the communication between the isolated inmates and their not less solitary jailers.

And here, gentle stranger, rest awhile! The drawbridge is yet raised: thou canst, for a brief space, contemplate the exterior of yonder gloomy dens! Silence and desolation reign supreme around thee! But; this silence hath for *thee* its charm—this desolation hath for thee, its beauty! *Thou* breathest the pure air of heaven—*thou* hast, above thee, the blue sky—*thou* art *free!*

Thou startest! Thou hearest a groan, say'st thou? 'Twas nothing! 'Twas the morning prayer, and is the evening orison of the inmate of yon dungeon! He hath offered these, until his hair hath whitened, and his cheek hath blanched, and gathered furrows—for thirty years the voice of man hath not fallen on his ear!

Hearest thou that? 'tis a song of liberty from the den above thee! the daily chaunt of the maniac within, whose dreams, and songs, and ravings are of liberty—his whole extent of world a few square feet of stone-encircled earth! *Thou* hearest him, but his voice reacheth not within!

Another groan! Another sigh! Aye; and another; and another! The air thou now inhalest, is made up but of these! Each stone of yon grim structure, exhaleth sighs from hearts that break in solitude—each stone too hath a voice—hark! they gather strength, and invocating deep, deep, curses on humanity, burst forth in one loud cry: retribution! retribution!

We are alone: before the principal entrance to the interior of the Bastile; to the right stands the *Tour de la Comté;* to the left, the *Tour de la Bazinière;* between these, the ponderous door which opens into the entrance-hall or vestibule; the massive hinges, "grate harsh thunder," the drawbridge "falls with horrid clang; the gates fly open with impetuous recoil!" Let us enter.

As we proceed, it will be necessary to indicate the several *official* apartments &c. as they existed previously to the erection of the new building, to which, under Monsieur De Sartigne's administration, they were removed.

The great gate of the Bastile, situated between the Comté and Baziniére towers, was three inches thick; lined, inside and out, (as indeed were all the doors throughout the prison) with strong plates of iron; secured by three bolts of the same, and two locks; each lock having three keys. Within this first door, and across the corps de-garde, into which it opened, extended a strong wicket, about four feet high, strengthened like the door, with iron plates; and moreover, surmounted by sharp pointed iron spikes three feet long; this was the first corps-de-garde of the interior. At the bottom of it, fronting the principal gate mentioned above, a second door, five feet in height, (to pass through which it was necessary to stoop,) covered, like the former, with iron plates, but without a wicket — opened into a passage, or rather a square cell, having two doors, one on the right, the other on the left, and a third opposite that by which it was entered. The latter, led into the second corps-de-garde of the interior, considerably larger than the first, and which served as a barrack for the sub-officers of the garrison, who slept on camp-beds placed around it, against the walls. The door of this second corps-de-garde was square, and constructed of solid beams bound with iron; in the middle of it was an aperture three inches square closed by a sliding panel, through which the officer on duty received the reports of the sentinel on guard in the vestibule without, and whose province was to note the minutest actions of such prisoners as were allowed the privilege of walking in the court: these the officer entered in a book devoted to this purpose, and, every evening submitted the same to the inspection of the Governor.

A glance at this easily distorted system of espionage, will suffice to show its vexatious character, and how readily it could be wrested to the discomfort of the unfortunates pent up within, whose short hour of liberty was thus rendered even more irksome, than their long solitude. A gesture—a look—a murmur breathed too loud—all was noted; the former misinterpreted, the latter misconstrued, perhaps, by the prejudice, the ill-will, the ill-humour or the caprice of sentinel or officer.

The vestibule above mentioned, was partly built in the thickness of the inner wall, connecting the Comté and Bazinière towers, to which it formed the entry; the door leading to the former, being situated to the right, and that to the stairs of the latter, to the left; these too, were the extreme boundaries of the sentinel's march, extending about ten paces. A wicket and a door, precisely similar to those guarding the first entrance, formed the last barrier, separating this portion of the Bastile, from the court within its walls and towers: of this court, the sentinel on duty was master; as a measure of greater precaution, however, his instructions were imperative, not to allow any prisoner to approach within three paces of the wicket and gate under his surveillance.

We will not proceed further at present, but return to the passage or cell, situated between the first corps-de-garde of the interior, and the second.

The door to the right, or Comté-tower side, opened into a small

vestibule, or ante-chamber, where prisoners waited, prior to their examination in the large apartment adjoining: this latter formed, until 1761, the *Salle de Conseil* or Council-chamber; on one side stood a large recess, denominated the *Pillon*, or Pillage-store; a term, coined to express the use to which it was appropriated. On the same side, a strong door leading through a narrow passage, terminated by a winding flight of stairs, established the medium of communication with the governor's apartments above, consisting of two large rooms, converted, at a later period, into cells.

The door to the left, or Bazinière-tower side of the first vestibule, opened into a series of small chambers, four in number, communicating by a second winding flight of stairs to two small rooms above: these were inhabited by the *Porte-clefs* or Turnkeys, but were afterwards also used as prisons.

Before we enter the towers themselves, we will examine the remaining offices, apartments, &c., constructed in the walls uniting them.

Between the Comté and Trésor towers, existed a narrow passage leading to the bastion and the gardens upon it, by means of a standing bridge or *pont-dormant* over the great ditch of the château. Four doors closed this passage; two outer, and two inner: one of the former opening inwards from that side nearest the court, the second, from that nearest the bridge; the two latter also opened inwards, the space between each, when shut, forming a small *corps-de garde*, where a sentinel was always on duty. Between these inner doors again, in the recess they formed when closed, two other doors, one to the right, and one to the left, conducted to the prisons on the basement, and thence, up a narrow flight of stairs, to those corresponding above. The bridge, connectingthe Bastile with its bastion, was of peculiar construction. After projecting about fifty feet across the ditch, it inclined thence, almost at a right angle, in a direction parallel with the Tour de la Chapelle; midway between which and the Trésor tower, it again diverged, in a direct line, towards the gorge of the bastion, to which it led by two stone steps. To the right and to the left of the bridge, at its point of junction with the gorge of the bastion, was a strong door, opening upon a narrow flight of steps, by which the roundaway or *chemin des rondes* was gained. This was a gallery or terrace, partly stone, partly wood, built upon huge piles driven into the ditch, and mortised and cemented to the interior of the great wall surrounding the château and the great ditch. Four zig-zags of masonry, two on each side, protected that end of the bridge, above mentioned, which adjoined the Bastile.

Midway between the Trésor tower and the Tour de la Chapelle, was the ancient entrance into Paris. On the completion of the château, this space was walled up, and within it, apartments were constructed; these were the most commodious in the Bastile, before the erection of Monsieur de Sartinge's building. To the left of this arch, formerly existed the chapel of the Bastile; but after the removal of this place of worship, additional prisons occupied its site. On a level with the court outside, and built in the wall, a recess, scarcely large enough for a man to stand upright in, formed what was called the *cabinet*, in which, on the passage of any function-

ary across the court, during the solitary promenade of the prisoner, he was compelled to conceal himself, with his face to the wall, until after the individual had disappeared.*

Above the arch, or ancient entry of Paris, was fixed the clock of the Bastile; it could not be seen from the second court, after Monsieur de Sartigne erected the edifice which reached from the Tour de la Chapelle to the Tour de la Liberté.

In the walls connecting the Tour du Coin and the Tour du Puits, on the basement story, were the lodgings for the cooks, scullions and underlings of the château: above these, were more prisons.

The culinary department, consisting of kitchens, sculleries and wash-houses, &c., was situated right and left on the basement story, between the Tour du Puits and the Tour de la Liberté; beneath, was the dungeon of the latter, and above, a series of three prisons. As the demand for prison-room increased, kitchens, offices, wash-houses, servants' chambers and officers' apartments were transferred from the court within the walls of the Bastile, to the court of the government.

Between the Tours de la Liberté and Bertaudière, on the ground-floor, was the new chapel, of which two doors, covered with iron plates, formed the entrance. It will be remembered that the ancient place of worship adjoined the tower to which it gave its name, and which was the first built.

On the basement, between the Bertaudière and the Bazinière towers, were situated the apartments of the higher functionaries of the Bastile, such as the lieutenant-governor, the major, &c.; those on the story above, were occupied by the chaplain, the surgeon, and one or two turnkeys: the whole of these were distributed in precisely the same order as the other apartments of the château, being attained, the lower ones, by double doors, strongly fastened; the upper, by a narrow flight of stone stairs through a second series of doors similar to the first.

This constituted the interior arrangement of the official and domestic departments of the Bastile, prior to 1761.

At the latter period, the one large court originally comprised within the eight towers and their connecting masonry, was, by the erection of a new building, divided into two smaller courts, the larger, or first attained, being called the great inner court; and the smaller, the Cour du Puits: the former, bounded by the Towers de la Comté, du Trésor, de la Chapelle, de la Liberté, de la Bertaudière, and de la Bazinière, and the massive walls between them, formed a parallelogram, about one hundred and twenty feet long, by seventy-two wide, French measurement.

At the bottom of this court, was constructed the handsome modern building, above mentioned. It was three stories high from the basement, each story containing a suite of three rooms. From the level of the court, a flight of five steps conducted to the principal door, which, like *that*, forming the grand entrance to the main-body of the building from the court of the government, was defended by

* If the prisoner did not perceive the approach of the party, it was the duty of the sentinel to warn him of the same, by crying out: "au cabinet! au cabinet!"

double doors; two on the side facing the great inner court; and two on the other, or side of the Cour du Puits: two sentinels were always on duty here, and these doors closed the passage which led from the first inner court to the Cour du Puits. Between them was a vestibule, to the left of which a handsome stone staircase communicated with the apartments above. To the right, a double door conducted into the new council-chamber, and into a narrow passage leading to the lodgings of the subaltern officers and of the Porte-clèfs, situated behind the council-chamber itself. By the side of the staircase to the left of the vestibule, a door opened into the new kitchens and offices; these had double issues into the Cour du Puits. The suite of apartments above the council-chamber, was occupied by the governor; those on the second and the third story, by other superior functionaries; one large chamber, on the latter, served as an Infirmary.

The second inner court, or Cour du Puits, was bounded by the tower of that name, the Tour du Coin, their connecting walls, and the new *Hôtel du Governement*, and derived its name, as did the tower in the left corner, from a well adjoining the latter: its measurement, in French feet was seventy-two in width by forty-two in length; it served both as the poultry-yard of the Bastile, and as the promenade of the prisoners confined within the Tour du Puits and the Tower du Coin.

Each of the eight towers contained five prisons, the entrance to which, as to that of the towers themselves, was through two ponderous doors three inches thick, lined within and without, with iron-plates; every door, having in addition, three locks, each differently constructed.

The dungeons called *cachots*, (black-holes) were the lowermost prisons, being nineteen feet below the level of the court, and only five above that of the bottom of the ditch. True, that the latter was generally dry, except when the Seine overflowed; but at such periods the water nearly filled the dungeons, rushing in through their only aperture—a narrow barbacan—by which, scarcely air, but no light, could penetrate; the atmosphere within, was, consequently, horribly unwholesome; and—horror upon horror—the soil and the walls, swarmed with spiders, toads and rats. In three of these *cachots*, viz: of the Tour du Puits, of the Tour du Coin, and of the Tour du Trèsor, existed cages,* one in each tower, constructed of beams covered with iron-plates, and of dimensions so small, that within them, a man could neither sit, stand, nor lie down.

On the basement, were the cells called No. 1 La Comté, La Ber-

* The existence of these cages, has been called into question—indeed denied; but the fact is established upon incontrovertible authority. A Bishop of Verdun, the inventor of these horrid places of torture, was one of the first victims: the Cardinal de la Balue was pent up in one, for eleven years: one of the Princes of Armagnac too, after many years of protracted suffering, died raving mad in one of them. There were, originally eight, *constructed for the basement story of each tower of the Bastile.* Subsequently, three were removed—one to the dungeon of Vincennes—and two, by Louis Onze, to the Château de Plessis-les-Tours. Cardinal Richelieu placed a fourth in one of the *oubliettes* of his hôtel; a fifth disappeared: and the remaining three remained in the dungeons of the towers already designated, until within a few years of the destruction of the Bastile. The earliest mention made of them is in 1475.

taudière &c; their form—common alike to all the rest—was an irregular polygon, varying in diameter, from fifteen to sixteen feet, and from fifteen to twenty in height. On the first story were the prisons, No. 2 La Comté &c. and on the second, those called No. 3. Above these last, and immediately beneath the roof of the towers, were the *calottes*, (καλυπο, a skull cap) after the dungeons, the most wretched of the cells of the Bastile; the inmates suffering the extremes of heat in summer, and of cold in winter. They were formed of the space enclosed within the eight stone arches which supported the roof of the tower, and were scarcely six feet wide, although more than twice as lofty. The walls of these upper dungeons were nine feet thick, a longitudinal hole, cut into the thickness of the wall, serving for a window, which was attained from within by three steps. Here the aperture might be a foot or more in width, diminishing towards the exterior to a narrow slit only two or three inches wide. Light was admitted into the other cells by similar apertures, but the walls, augmenting in thickness as they approached nearer the foundation, these embrasures were, in consequence, gradually lengthened; so that very little light penetrated into the lower chambers. Some of the latter had large windows besides, but this advantage was destroyed by the massive bars of iron which intersected them. The Trésor and Chapelle towers had loop holes all round, before some of which, planks were fastened to prevent communication with the exterior.

Except the *cachots*, all the cells had either a chimney-place, or a stove, but the former, already very narrow, was partially closed in the middle, at the bottom and at the top, by thick bars of iron, which prevented the smoke from ascending, and rendered the comfort of the scanty fire totally joyless.

A narrow winding staircase, with a small landing on each story, and a second in the middle of the flight between, led from the entrance doors below, to the roof of the towers, which formed a parapeted terrace or platform, continued along the solid masonry connecting them, and constituting a promenade for *prisoners of distinction*: it was crowned by thirteen pieces of cannon.

The governorship of the Bastile was a post of importance, in the gift of the Monarch, and from the large emoluments derived therefrom, was, especially in later times, conferred as a recompense for signal services; at certain periods of its earlier history, when it figured principally as a fortress, the care of it devolved upon men renowned for their military talent: thus, in the list of its governors, appear, amongst other names, that of Prince Louis of Bavaria, in 1413; of the Duke of Guise in 1588; of Maximilian de Bethune, Duke of Sully, under Henri Quartre; of Marshal Bassompiére, Marshal Vitry, the Connétable de Lingues; of Breauté Duke of Luxembourg, and Le Maréchal de l'Hospital, under Louis Treize; of the Duke of Orleans in 1652; and from 1697 to 1708, that of Benigne d'Auvergne de St. Marc, of *Iron-Mask* celebrity, who, for *his services*, was translated from the Château de Pignerol to that of the Bastile.

The government of this justly execrated edifice, originally consisted

only of the Commandant or Governor, his military subordinates, the small garrison, and a few servants; but, as from year to year, it gradually lost the characteristics of a fortress, and assumed those of a state prison, the number of functionaries increased in the same proportion as the additional duties, until, towards the end of 1780, exclusively of one hundred soldiers, forming the regular garrison, it amounted to thirty-three, including a lieutenant-governor, a major, an aide-major, a physician, a surgeon and apothecary, a chaplain and two assistants, two confessors, a clerk of the archives, and a commissary; besides the porte-clefs, (key bearers) of which there were four: one for each two towers.

The constitution of the Bastile, appears also to have varied at different periods; at first, embodying a code, strictly military; gradually assuming a character more arbitrary, in proportion as the crimes of despotism necessitated secresy and concealment, until the arch-machiavelism of its minions, completed a system of laws so inhuman, that posterity has damned it by one word comprehensive of all its odium: the Bastile!

Would, for the honour of human nature, it were possible to doubt the truth of the horrors of confinement in that den of infamy!

Often totally unconscious of the offence for which he was incarcerated, the wretched victim dragged on a life of protracted hope, until he at length sunk, under the tortures of suspense! The light and air of heaven meted out to him in scanty portions—deprived even of the bitter consolation of numbering the dreary days by the declining glimmer of the setting sun—his very mite of food rendered more loathsome by its filthiness—cut off from hope—dead to the world, though existing in it—entombed within walls which never echoed with sound of foot or of voice, save the jailer's—how often did he in the bitterness of his soul, crave after the means of terminating his horrid existence! He sighed for liberty: it came! and then, he sighed again for the slimy walls of his dungeon, and for its nauseous occupants, his companions—more supportable these to him, than the cold smiles of unknown faces, or the colder welcome of the stranger—he walked upon the earth, unrecognized, unremembered—a senseless, flitting shade of the past!

CHAPTER V.

A SCENE IN THE BASTILE. DISCOVERY OF THE SECRET CLOSET IN THE WALL.

In the apartment designated as the council-chamber, situated to the right of the passage between the two first corps-de-gardes leading into the great inner court, sat the Sieur Benigne d'Auvergne de St. Marc, the governor, and Corbè his nephew, the lieutenant-governor.

It was a large, lofty room—a den rather—of oblong form, ill-furnished, and dingy with dirt and smoke, which, for three centuries, had been gradually encrusting the uncemented walls; these dank and

clammy, and here and there peeled and time-eaten into holes, exudated bulkless drops of moisture—like beads—which stood first motionless and irresolute upon the surface; then, slowly joined; then, in self-formed rivulets of serpentine course, chased one another thick and fast down the massive stone-work, emptying themselves into tiny pools, fed by similar tributaries, and which obeying, in their turn, the same law of gravitation, slowly sought their level in the hollows worn into the stone-floor, by the feet of countless victims. Three steps, midway between the door and the opposite end of the room, led up to within about four feet of the sill of one large window, well barred and cross-barred with iron, through which, after traversing twelve feet of wall, penetrated the last glimmer of a dismal early winter's day; an oaken table, massive, and roughly carved, stood fixed into the solid masonry by iron clamps; near the door, to the right, was a stone seat, for the accommodation of prisoners; two arm-chairs completed the furniture. In the chimney, on a slightly raised hearth, flickered the dying embers of a scanty fire which served the purpose of a lamp, and cast a lurid glare upon the faces of the uncle and the nephew.

They were seated opposite each other, one on each side of the smoky chimney, which every few minutes puffed out a volume of thick vapour, and compelled the pair to fall back into their chairs; yet, as the keen wind swept past the outer walls, moaning and whistling through every aperture—buffetting the lofty battlements—losing itself in the courts—then forcing its way back through every crevice and cranny of the dismal building of which they were the masters — they shrugged up their shoulders, and rubbed their hands, and drew nearer and nearer to the fire, looking behind them, and on each side of them, as though the cold were a visible companion of spectral nature, whose death-like touch they dreaded.

St. Marc was a diminutive old man, now eighty years of age. His complexion, naturally sallow, had been scorched by a southern sun, into the colour of ochre, and the dying glare of the still blazing log—as he held his head three quarters averted from it—imparted to his face the appearance of a live coal of overgrown dimensions, with two spots in the upper part, burning more fiercely then the rest. Cruelty—innate cruelty and cunning, were imprinted in the deep furrows of his brow, so puckered up and be-wrinkled, that the low, compressed, retreating forehead, resembled a strip of parchment dividing his eyes from his hair; the latter, hardly grizzled, grew thick and strong, and fell in a *queue* behind. His shrivelled hands extended over the glowing embers—his elbows resting on his knees—his head sunken between his bowed shoulders—he sat gazing intently at his nephew; who, in a similar position, his arms folded on his lap, his feet propped up on the hearth, his face nearly touching that of the governor, was making some communication of sufficient importance to render them both unaware of the gloom which envelopedthem.

Likewise cast in a dwarfish mould, but ill-formed, and of a meagre though sinewy frame, Corbé formed a fitting pendant to his uncle; his repulsive features were rendered still more hideous by their peculiar expression, embodying every vice, without a glimpse of one redeeming virtue; a mass of red hair fell in lanky shocks over

his face and shoulders; whilst his deep-sunken grey eyes, shot with blood, glowed like those of a ferret.

To these two were entrusted the supreme direction of the government of the Bastile and the fate of the unfortunate prisoners.

"As he refuses his food," observed Corbé to St. Marc, "I ordered Ru to leave him to his humour, and give him no more."

"Thou did'st well," responded St. Marc. "Said'st thou two days?"

"This is the third, worthy uncle, that nothing has passed his lips."

"What was the purport of the letter of anticipation* concerning him?" asked St. Marc.

"To allow him the ordinary† of the château," replied Corbé.

"'Tis too much for these prisoners," growled St. Marc. "Nephew! we must retrench the expenditure. From to-morrow, place them on half-allowance of wine: since they will not drink it, they cannot want it;" and he exchanged a chuckle with his nephew.

"That," observed the latter, "will save ten bottles a day, uncle; and at the end of a year, put four thousand livres in our pocket! shall we not commence to night?"

"Thou art ever reckoning the gains," retorted the uncle, with a half flattering smile; but art thou *sure* that No. 2. La Bertaudière will *not* take his food?"

"So sure, that if he hold out two days longer, we shall have to send him to St. Paul's by night;" chuckled Corbé.‡

"Hum!" grunted St. Marc, shaking his head; "what a fool for his pains! Hast gone thy rounds, Corbé?"

"Did'st ever know me fail in my duty, uncle?"

"I said not *that*; but, hast thou seen to the scaffolding on the towers, and assured thyself of its safety?"

"I have withdrawn the solid traverse planks, uncle; and placed sawn ones in their stead: 'tis only ninety feet to the bottom!" here he grinned in the old man's face, and rubbed his hands with exulta-

* A letter of anticipation, (*lettre d'anticipation*) was the document forwarded to the governor, before the arrival of a prisoner, to inform him of the intended arrest of the latter, and also contained his instructions as to the treatment he was to receive. (*Memoirs de la Porte.*)

† The ordinary of the Bastile was as follows: On fast-days, Wednesdays and Fridays:— *breakfast;* consisting of a plate of meagre soup, one of fish, and two entrées: *dinner;* a plate of meagre soup, one of eggs and one of vegetables. On other days: *breakfast;* a plate of soup *au-gras;* (made with meat); a slice of boulli; (the beef from which the soup is made,) and one *entrée: dinner;* a plate of roast meat, a ragôut, and a salad; this, with one pound of bread, and a bottle of wine *per diem* formed the almost unvarying diet of the prisoners. It is, however, necessary to state, that, besides the above, there was another meal, called the first breakfast, (*premier dejeuner*) which generally consisted of a plate of lentils, or some kind of farinaceous vegetable, dressed with butter or oil. Properly speaking, there were but two *regular* meals a day, viz: the second breakfast, (*second dejeuner*) and the dinner; the former served at eleven o'clock, and the latter at five in the day; the first breakfast, was sent in at seven in the morning.

‡ In the cemetery of this church, sometimes called St. Jean la Bastile, the prisoners who died in the Bastile were interred. On its demolition, the worship was transferred to the church of St. Louis, which then took the name of St. Louis and St. Paul's; more generally called St. Paul's; and sometimes, from its ancient association, St. Paul la Bastile. THIS IS THE CHURCH ALLUDED TO IN THE INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

tion at his scheme for trapping any prisoner who might attempt escape that way.

"Corbé!" said the governor; "thou art above price! Thou deservest favour at the hands of Majesty itself." Here he stopped; after a short pause, he looked around suspiciously, drew nearer to his nephew, and in a hollow whisper, continued, with trepidation: "Deserve my confidence, nephew, and thou shalt learn the secret of No. 3 la Bertaudière!"

"What?" exclaimed the lieutenant-governor, half-rising from his seat: "the secret of the Iron-Mask?"

"Hush! Chut!" hurriedly interposed St. Marc, listening anxiously: "I heard the draw-bridge fall;" and in confirmation of his assertion, the opening of doors became audible; the clank of arms echoed distinctly from without, accompanied by the heavy tramp of soldiery; the next minute, the muskets were grounded, the door of the council-chamber flew open, and unannounced, entered D'Argenson.

"*Tonnerre dieu!* Sieur Governor," exclaimed he, unceremoniously advancing: "'t is surely dark enough for a lamp."

St. Marc and Corbé slowly rose, as D'Argenson's figure became distinct in the gloom, and bowing to him with a mixture of respect and fear, the former hesitatingly responded:

"Pardon us, Monseigneur! but my nephew and I were absorbed in conversation, and did not perceive the fall of day: we will, however, call for lights."

"Nay, nay! Sieur St. Marc; since thy humour is to sit in darkness, I will conform to it: only, throw on another log, for the night is chilly, and thy apartment strikes damp, as though it were not often aired." Suiting the action to the word, he at once threw upon the embers, two heavy pieces of wood, which soon catching fire, commenced casting out a volume of flame and smoke, and a bright glare into the chamber; he then took possession of the chair, just vacated by Corbé, and beckoning to the governor to re-seat himself, continued. "If thou hast done talking with thy nephew, Sieur Governor, I would hold some private conversation with thee."

"Corbé!" said St. Marc; "I will see thee presently:" but ere the words had left his uncle's lips, Corbé had disappeared.

"*Ventre bleu!*" ejaculated D'Argenson; "thy nephew hath a notion of breeding, Sieur St. Marc! he is not so slow of apprehension as he looks!" and he drew his chair closer up to the governor's.

"Monsegnieur is complimentary," growled St. Marc, "but he has only to look, and he is obeyed."

"Thou liest! Sieur Governor," deliberately retorted D'Argenson, glaring into the face of the astounded and half-affrighted St. Marc, "I tell thee, thou liest: and thou knowest it. Hast not thou a prisoner in No. 2. La Bertaudière?"

"We have; Lieutenant!" responded the governor, faltering.

"How fares he, Sieur Governor?" asked D'Argenson.

St. Marc trembled, as the lieutenant of police questioned him thus closely, respecting a man, whom he expected would, within a few days, die of starvation. Fearful of encountering the lynx-like gaze of his interrogator, he averted his head, as he hesitatively responded:

"Monsegnieur! he refuses his food; no kind of nourishment tempts him; yet, the ordinary of the château—which according to our letter of anticipation—

"The *ordinary* of the château!" vociferated D'Argenson, interrupting him, and emphasizing the word; "I know all, Sieur Governor! Thou hast wilfully mis-interpreted the purport of that letter. He is rated* at fifteen livres a day, and yet thou pratest to me of the *ordinary*—"

"'Twere wasting his majesty's food, to give it where it is not needed, lieutenant;" hastily observed St. Marc; in turn, interrupting D'Argenson.

"And wasting his majesty's gold," retorted the latter, "to bury it in a pouch which already overflows, Sieur Governor! But, hearken, St. Marc! It is my pleasure that thou treat No. 2. La Bertaudière, with all the liberality thou canst boast of; and that thou allow him the best the Bastile affords. *He* must not die; *sang dieu!*" Here he arose, and casting a withering glance upon the pallid and trembling governor, continued: "Beware how thou disobeyest my commands, or I will crush *thee, tonnerre dieu!* as thou didst the Duke de Lauzun's spider;"† and turning on his heel, he abruptly quitted the chamber: St. Marc, without daring to utter a word in reply, tottered to the gate, and having seen him over the bridge, returned to his apartment.

He found Corbé seated in the chair he had occupied before D'Argenson's sudden entry.

"So, so! uncle!" said the lieutenant-governor frowning; "the lieutenant of police essayeth the high hand in the *Bastile* too! By heaven! I wish we held him within its walls."

"He is not honest enough for that, Corbé! But I am glad thou did'st so well conceal thyself: that closet will do us good service."

"I lost not a word, worthy uncle! not a whisper can escape unheard. D'Argenson himself, with all his cunning, would never suspect its existence there.

"Nephew! the man is a very demon, and knows the thoughts that lie deepest in the soul."

Corbé shook his head, looked around him suspiciously, and then muttered in a half-whisper:

"There is treachery; uncle! he hath his spies, where they are least expected; aye—even within the walls of the Bastile!"

"Ah! sayest thou so, with *reason*, nephew?" enquired St. Marc;

* The daily expenditure, for each prisoner, was regulated according to a tariff, of which the following is a summary: a prince of the blood, fifty livres *per diem:* a marshal of France, thirty-six livres: a lieutenant-general, twenty-four livres: a councillor of the parliament, fifteen livres: a judge, a financeer, or a priest, ten livres: a *bourgeois*, or an *avocat*, at five livres: a *petit bourgeois*, at three livres: and lower classes, including the guards and domestics, two livres and a half. A livre was worth (like the modern franc) about ten pence sterling.

(*Anecdotes Historiques sur la Bastille.*)

† The Duke De Lauzun was confined in one of the solitary dungeons of the castle of Pignerol, of which St. Marc was governor. The only amusement of the wretched prisoner, was feeding a spider which he had succeeded in taming; but the governor, surprising him one day at his innocent recreation, wantonly put his foot on the insect and crushed it.

"*mort-dieu*! Name *him* thou dost suspect; the dungeons of the ditch shall be a heaven to him."

"Chut!" exclaimed Corbé;" here he smiled, significantly jerking his head in the direction of the wall, as he continued: "Walls have ears."

"And tongues too; which thou canst not gag;" exclaimed a hollow voice, that appeared to proceed from the door of the apartment.

St. Marc and Corbé started up from their seat, the latter rushing to the door, the latter tottering after him, and exclaiming:

"Curses! curses! we are betrayed!"

Corbé had scarcely opened the door, than he retreated a few paces, followed by an individual of gigantic proportions, upon whose swarthy features gleamed the red light of the blazing log.

The uncle and the nephew became aware of the presence of Jacques.

"What said'st thou? knave—traitor! eaves-dropper!" vociferated St. Marc, trembling with rage and astonishment; whilst his not less astonished nephew, his hand upon his sword, seemed half inclined to attack the spy.

"Sieur Governor," retorted Jacques; unmoved, either by the anger of St. Marc, or by the menacing attitude of Corbé: "thou art prodigal of titles; but they befit *me* less worthily than thine office befitteth thee, for I know not how I have merited them."

"Eh!" exclaimed Corbé: "saids't thou nothing; ere we opened *the door?*"

"Wouldst have me hold converse with the devil, lieutenant?" replied Jacques; "or dost think me one beside his reason that babbleth to himself?"

"And heard'st thou nothing from us ere thou didst enter? Say!" observed the Governor, in a tone so hurried, that it betrayed the anxious interest he felt in the reply.

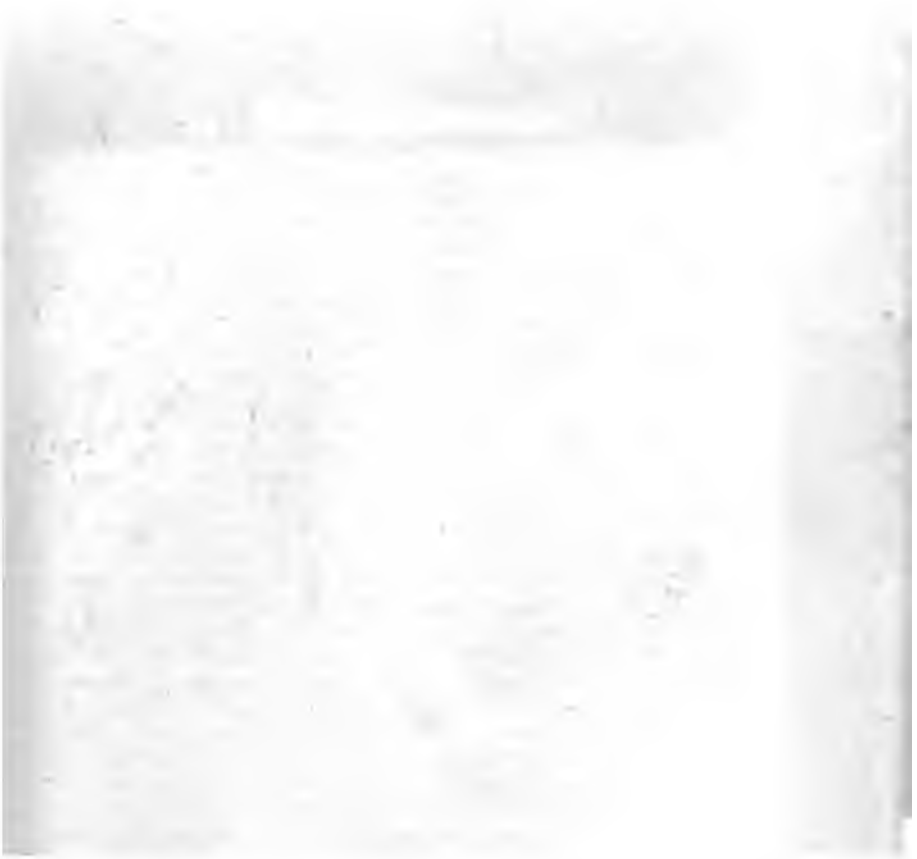
"Thy doors are thick, Sieur Governor; and so are thy walls;" responded Jacques; "and need be, when those within, fear their words are heard without. But thou tamperest with my time, which is elsewhere required, and I would complete my business with thee."

Both the Governor and his lieutenant were completely at a loss to comprehend the replies of Jacques, and baffled in their endeavours to ascertain, whether he had, by stealth, possessed himself of their secret. St. Marc had advanced close to the spy, standing between him and the door, so as to bar his egress; Corbé, on a sign from his uncle, unsheathed his weapon, and placed himself by his side.

Too cunning, to be deceived by Jacques' evasive answers, both perceived they had betrayed themselves so far, that they must of necessity confide in him, or risk a discovery, without a possibility of punishing the babbler. St. Marc, then, addressed the spy.

"Thou art a knave of ready wit, but hast played the eaves-dropper to a secret, which *we* would, remained such: hence thou stirrest not ere thou swearest not to divulge it: swear—and thou art free!"

"Why, hark ye, Sieur Governor!" responded Jaques. "Dost think to fright me with a skewer? Thine own weapon, even though riven to the end of thy lieutenant's, would be no match against this:" and he cooly withdrew, from beneath his vest, a large petronel, cocking it as he continued: "I should, now, force thee to divulge thy



secret, seeing thou art in my power; but it were scarcely worth the trouble, since by thine own confession, 'tis no longer thine alone. I seek it not; nor will be sworn to keep it."

"Traitor!" roared Corbé; "thou hast it then;" and he made a lunge at the spy.

Jacques, who perceived his intention, stepped aside to avoid the thrust, and ere Corbé recovered his position, dashed the weapon from his grasp; seizing him by the hair of the head, he hurled him from him with tremendous force, and he fell senseless, in a heap, against the wall. St. Marc had not time to prevent the movement, nor to rescue his nephew, whilst Jacques, who had scarcely moved from his place, now advanced towards him, as he stood irresolute whether to recede or to resist, or to seek safety in flight.

"Sieur Governor;" said the spy. "I intend *thee* no harm; thou art too hoar to court my vengeance. I bear this to thee from Monseigneur d'Argenson; which, safely delivered in thy hands, my mission ends;" and he tendered to the trembling Governor a piece of parchment, with a large seal appended thereto. "Thou wilt perhaps be my safe conduct to the first gate, and next time I come, shew me the courtesy due to those, who are protected by that seal."

St. Marc tremblingly took the parchment, and glanced his eye over it, nor needed a closer inspection to perceive, that it was one of those documents, which insured the bearer safe egress from the Bastile. Bowing to the spy with a mixture of deference and fear, he preceded him out of the room, leaving Corbé groaning on the stone floor.

A few minutes after, the creaking of the draw-bridge and the slam of the gate, announced the departure of Jacques.

This scene took place one week before the events recounted in the first chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SISTERS AND THE FORTUNE-TELLER.

The Reader must now return to the balconied apartment looking out upon the Rue D'Enfer, where, also, he will picture to himself, Julie and Jeanne de St. Auney, seated, on the evening of the third day after the unwelcome visit of the Capuchin.

A keen, north-east wind moaned mournfully without, and as it swept past the casement, every now and then dashed a shower of sleet against the panes, as in evidence of the rigour of the early winter. But within, all was comfort: the window—the only one—was fastened, hermetically excluding the searching blast: the curtains, of dark blue damask, were closely drawn; whilst a cheerful wood fire, blazed in the low hearth—the burning logs sending up a volume of sparks, and crackling loud and frequently, as though laughing the cold to scorn. The apartment, of an hexagonal form and lofty, measured about sixteen feet by twelve; the walls were decorated with old tapestry, (illustrative of scriptural history) reaching from the fresco-painted ceiling, to the well-polished oaken floor; with here and there,

against the wainscot, and encased in frames more antique than the ancient faces they encircled, sundry portraits of nobles and nobles' dames, stiff, spare, and superannuated. But notwithstanding these latter evidences of a mundane taste, the richly carved *prie-dieu* in a recess of the room, the high-backed chairs with their varnished carvings, soft cushions, and well-stuffed arms and back; the elaborately wrought table, with its tesselated marble slab; the scollop-shell standing out from the side of the door; the six sculptured brackets upholding the "graven images," of the four Evangelists, of their Holy Master, and of his Virgin Mother, with other mementoes of sanctity, or of its semblance—these, told of times by-gone, when holy abbots with portly stomach and well shaven crown, made this a resting-place, wherein to taste a few of earth's comforts, after extolling the beatitude of heaven, and dispensing benedicites, to the neighbouring Sisterhood of Our Lady of the Crib.

Before the fire, was drawn a neat work-table, covered with worsteds, silks, and knitting-needles; close to it, side by side, were seated the two sisters, busily engaged on a piece of tapestry stretched over a tambour frame: opposite them, intent upon her sewing, sat, bolt upright, a matron looking dame, in a high crowned cauchoise cap, which amazingly resembled a gigantic white butterfly with embroidered wings, turned topsy-turvy; she was about to make some observation about something, having for this purpose given a prefatory hem, and dropped her hands into her lap, when a deep sigh broke from the heaving bosom of Julie, who although apparently as assiduous at her work, made not the same progress as her sister; her needle being as often employed in picking out wrong stitches, as in pricking right ones.

"'Twill be charming when 'tis done," quoth the matron, adjusting her spectacles; "but it make one's eyes ache monstrously, to work by candle-light. I declare, I can scarcely see to thread my needle."

"Then, do leave off, Prevôt;" exclaimed Julie; "we shall be able to finish it without thy assistance."

"Oh! but my dear child, you will need my instructions for the shading; which is more than half the battle. When a girl, I was *re*-markably clever at shading;" and she stitched away with renewed courage.

Jeanne and Julie exchanged a smile, the former observing; "Thou hast lost none of thy talent, dear nurse."

"That always matures with years, my children;" responded the dame.

"Then should thine be past improvement, Prevôt," remarked Jeanne, laughing. "But, nurse; thou talkest of thy youth, as though thou didst regret thy present lot."

"You are both too good, for me to regret that, my darlings;" replied the matron; "but I was once young like you; and when a girl, I was *re*-markably pretty."

"Thou art not so *very* much otherwise now, Prevôt; is she Julie?" remarked Jeanne, smiling at this trait of ancient vanity.

"Jeanne! Jeanne! Thou art teazing our good nurse; I must take her part, lest thou make her angry."

"That would I not do for all the world, sister Julie. Thou art

not angry nurse?" and Jeanne, leaning across the table, affectionately embraced the matron.

"Angry, child? no!" responded Prevôt, "for if thou dost offend, thou hast a sweet way of making amends; but I was going to say, that I used to be accounted very pretty; the young gallants of our village used to make love-verses upon me! *so* tender, and *so* pathetic! I'll see if I can't remember a couplet."

"Oh!" exclaimed Julie, with an accent of pain; "I have pricked my finger."

"Ah! That was paying too much attention to me, and too little to thy work;" put in Prevôt, smiling.

Julie blushed deeply, and in removing the bougie, to divert the dame's attention, overthrew it.

"Oh! dear! Oh! dear!" exclaimed the matron, throwing up her hands, and throwing down her needle—"now the wedding wont take place this year; I'm sure it wont; for when I was going to be married, the very same thing happened to me! Oh! dear! Oh! dear!"

"I place more faith in my lover than in such omens;" responded Julie, half angrily, at the same time relighting the bougie; "I am sure he will soon come, and account, satisfactorily for his absence too."

"I am of thy opinion Julie;" remarked her sister; "although I do think it strange he has not sent some message to tranquillize thy mind."

"And I am sure and certain he will *not* come;" said Prevôt, positively; "for last night I dreamt of the nine of spades; and that's a sure sign of disappointment: then the last three nights I have dreamt of the ace of spades, which always bodes grief in the house."

"Pray now, dear nurse, don't be so prophetic; thou wilt make Julie quite nervous; she trembles already, and so shall I soon, if thou dost not cease thy evil auguries."

"But my dears, I must tell the truth;" remonstrated the matron; "besides; neither of you believe in omens, and dreams, and all that; so it can't make any difference."

"There! 'tis of no use;" cried Julie, throwing down her needle, and pushing herself back in her chair; "'tis of no use; I am doing it all wrong; I can do no more."

"Nor I, sister;" responded Jeanne, following her example; "but I am fatigued."

"So am I; quite;" put in Prevôt: indeed, this fact was self-evident, for she had not set a stitch for some time, having occupied herself in sundry attempts to thread her needle, and in watching the progress of the sisters; "so, if you like my dears, I'll explain to you all about my dreams, and what I saw in the cards last night."

"Oh! tell us our fortune!" exclaimed the two sisters at once; "that *will* amuse us so. Come! get out thy pack good nurse, and lay out the cards for us;" here they hastened to put away their tapestry, and clear the work-table of its stitching apparatus; whilst Prevôt, overjoyed at having an opportunity of showing her skill, raked the ashes away from beneath the burning log, and threw on another, heaping it over with peat; the table was then drawn nearer to the fire, the sisters taking their seats opposite to their nurse, their arms entwined around each other's waist.

The matron wiped her spectacles with scrupulous care, and having examined them, to see they were perfectly free from dust, re-adjusted them to her satisfaction; then, proceeded to fumble in her pocket, whence after sundry dips, she fished out a pack of cards, enveloped in numerous folds of paper, and with much solemnity of manner, uncased them, replacing each envelope in her pocket.

"There my dears!" said she, counting them; "these have been in my possession ever since I was a girl; for even then I was reckoned *re*-markably correct in laying out the cards."

"Dear nurse!" observed Jeanne, "they are very much soiled; shall I not get the pack with which we sometimes play?"

"Not for ever so much child;" quickly retorted Prevôt. "Much dirt concealeth gold, says the proverb—

"Doth it add virtue to cards, nurse?" interrupted Jeanne, laughing, as Prevôt handed her the cards to cut. "Well! as thou wilt! we will abide by thy experience."

The ceremony of cutting duly performed, the sybil proceeded first, to lay out the pack on the table, in the shape of a horse-shoe, and then to consult them; laying her finger on each as she progressed through each stage of the operation.

"One, two, three;" exclaimed she, pausing between each number; "a club-man! four, five, six—that's thy colour Jeanne my child!" Here she held up the queen of hearts; "seven—and that's thine my fair Julie," continued she taking up the queen of diamonds! "Two, three, four, five—tears for thee;—six, seven—through a—has not thy lover dark eyes?" asked she.

"Hazel eyes; dark hazel; nurse." responded Julie.

"Ah! that's it—through a dark man; seven! oh dear! oh dear! here's much grief; two, three—in the house,—see! here are the three nines together;—four, five, six—Gracious Virgin! there's something very bad going to happen; for here's the ace of spades come out with the seven of the same suit; seven—and all the knaves together——"

"Indeed indeed, good Prevôt," exclaimed Jeanne, "thou shalt not continue; for thou bodest nought but evil.—"

"Nay! my dear," interrupted the dame; "*thou* liest well enough, but there's trouble, much trouble and tears for thee, through some fair woman, and a dark man;" so saying, she swept up the cards and commenced shuffling them.

"Now;" said she, addressing the younger sister; "'t is *thy* turn —we shall see whether thy truant lover is coming back;" and she pushed the cards over to the other side of the table. "With the left hand, child! Cut with the left hand?

"Does it so much signify nurse, which hand!"

"My dear; the right hand is uulucky," responded the sybil, taking the pack and distributing it as before—"very unlucky—and when I was a girl—hem! they *do* come out strangely to be sure——a very *re*-markable circumstance occurred to me—there now! is n't that odd? the knaves altogether again!—and all through cutting the cards with the right hand—just before I was going to be married!"

Having completed the mystical arrangement to her entire satis-

faction, the matron paused, eyeing the horse-shoe through her spectacles with an air of intense interest, the sisters alternately regarding her, and exchanging looks brimful of silent mirth and incredulity. She, then re-commenced the ceremony of counting, observing the same rule as before, never going beyond the mysterious number seven, nor repeating the not less mysterious number one.

"I do declare," said she, raising both her hands, her eye-brows at the same time corresponding to the movement—"if this is not a most *re*-markable circumstance! Thy lover, Julie, surrounded by knaves—and another man with him, that seems to belong to the law—the seven of spades and the ace together again—depend upon it," she continued, with solemn gravity; "something is going to happen to thy lover, Julie! There's a disappointment—with tears—ah! that's about the wedding."

In spite of her efforts to maintain a calm exterior, the sensitive Julie was unable longer to bear up against the oppression which overpowered her spirits. Although she did not really believe in the mystical lore of her nurse, her young heart had its misgivings as to the constancy of her lover, from whom she had not heard now, for three days; this circumstance alone, predisposed her to attach more importance than she otherwise would, or than she imagined possible, to the predictions of the sybil; suddenly reclining her head on her sister's beautiful shoulder, she burst into tears.

Prevôt attributed this outbreak of sorrow, to the nature of her communication, fully believing, herself, that every syllable she had uttered, would infallibly come to pass. She however felt hurt to see her nursling shed tears, and began comforting her. "My dear Julie; thou must not give way, but prepare against what is to be. When a girl, I was *re*-markably given to the weaknesses of my sex; but I have lived to overcome them. Let me get thee a glass of sugared water, with a little raspberry vinegar!"—

"No!" sobbed Julie; 'tis only momentary; I am very silly to give way. There! I have done."

But her tears still continued to flow, and Jeanne, making a sign to Prevôt, the latter proceeded reluctantly, to put up her pack; not however, before she had concluded mentally, telling the fortune of her young mistress.

Jeanne folded her sister to her bosom, in sympathy, shedding tears too. "Cry, sister Julie, if thou cans't—'t will ease thy heart—thou wilt feel better presently. Indeed 't is unaccountable how melancholy I myself feel; and that's not a complaint I'm subject too."

Smiling through her tears, Julie returned with interest, her sister's caresses, and, in a few minutes, both were engaged in a conversation to which the reader must presently become a listener.

Nature never formed two creatures of more winning loveliness, than the two sisters. Woman was imprinted in their every feature; whilst in every smile, every gesture, look and action, woman beamed forth still.

Jeanne was five years the senior of her sister Julie, as was apparent in the greater fulness of her bust, and in the graver expression of her fine countenance. She had attained that age, when female loveliness is most lovely; when feminine charms are most seductive.

Devoid alike of the childishness of girlhood, as of the severity of mature womanhood, her face still retained much of the expressive archness of the former, mellowed by the reflective air of the latter. There *were* times, when her countenance grew even grave; but this was merely a transitory expression, and like a passing cloud over a beautiful parterre, only served to render the succeeding sunshine more lovely.

Her deep blue, laughing eyes, were fringed by long, dark lashes; uncontaminated by powder, her hair, of a dark auburn, fell in abundant ringlets about her candid brow, and had it not been confined behind by a comb, would have covered the whole of her person. Like her sister, she was rather below the middle height, although the exquisite symmetry of her form caused her to appear above it. Her features, less regular than Julie's, were notwithstanding handsome; illumined by a sweet smile, which deepened two coy dimples in her fair cheeks, severing lips, by the side of which the reddest coral would have looked dull.

Julie was seventeen; something more than a maiden; less than woman. Her blooming charms, scarcely matured; her slight and graceful figure; her exquisite features, not yet divested of infantine archness; her timid look and shy deportment; attracted notice rather than courted it. Her complexion tinged by the pink of health, was fair as nature could make it. Her hair luxuriant as her sister's, but many shades lighter, floated over her shoulders and swan-like throat, around which the clustering ringlets clung with rival fondness. Her eyes, also blue, but of a colour less deep than those of Jeanne, possessed a cast of melancholy, which inspired the beholder with an unaccountable and unwitting interest in her.

How different they, and how striking their distinctness from that class of beauties, which at this period, ruled the luxurious court of Louis Quatorze! Transplanted thither, amongst its voluptuous *belles*, their artlessness, their unaffected grace, would have cast a sudden shadow over the factitious blandishments of the easy prudes that composed it; like the freshness of the modest violet, bursting fragrant and grateful from a bed of gaudy tulips! Happier they, in their seclusion, than the frivolous young coquettes of the day—only ambitious to reign, ephemeral sovereigns of a court, where virtue was held, almost as a crime, and in the absence of the reality, the semblance of it ridiculous: where the sacrifice of virgin honour was a necessary preliminary to the attainment of rank and fortune; where the celebrity thus unblushingly acquired, cast back no reproach upon its possessors: in a word; where every thing tended to nourish and promulgate laxity of morals amongst the women—licentiousness of principle amongst the men—who, old and young, the former from habit, the latter from example, gave unbridled course to passion; their debaucheries, their nocturnal adventures, their ruinous excesses, feeding the brain of the wits of the time, and furnishing them inexhaustible subjects for madrigals, epigrams, and sonnets. Even the conversation; the small-talk of the *salon*; the scandal of every *coterie*; the topics discussed at every *réunion*, were made up of one subject, interspersed with piquant *double-entendres*; nor did the laugh ever rise more hearty, than when a brilliant repartee conveyed

a scarcely covered allusion to acts, from which, in a *less* refined age, the veil of privacy would never have been withdrawn.

But this was the age of gallantry, when gallantry was cultivated as a science, excellence in which, was accounted more meritorious than proficiency in any other; and whilst the vanquisher of a dozen beauties strutted in the glare, regarded, envied, as a hero, the conqueror of as many provinces slunk back upon the admiration of posterity alone. Absorbed in pleasure, and amorous intrigue, the monarch himself set the example to his courtiers, who spared no pains, to administer to his palled appetite! Unhappy, indeed, that family, the female members of which, nature had endowed with superior attractions! nor less wretched the outraged relatives, unable to contend against arbitrary power!

Accustomed from her earliest years to regard her sister as superior to her own self, and to lean towards her for support, Julie had never felt the loss of the Baroness de St. Auney her mother, who survived the birth of her youngest daughter, only a few minutes. The Baron, now in the decline of life, had for many years been engaged in a law-suit with Monsieur D'Argenson, who, at the period of its commencement, held the bailiwick of Angoulême. Its origin was as follows:

Twenty-four years before the period of this tale, the Baron de St. Auney became the executor of a relative the Comte de St. Angin, who, at his demise, confided to him the administration of his property, consisting of sundry estates in the Duchy of Angoulême, and a large château on the Erdre, (adjoining the small estate of the baron,) moreover, constituting him guardian to his infant son.

Originally poor, the baron had never been able to improve his income; of too honest and simple a nature to owe to flattery his self-advancement, his sole ambition was to amass, by the prosecution of a system of economy that he laid down, a dowry for each of his daughters, suited to their rank; in order to this, he effected a conveyance of his estate to the son of his late friend, allotting to himself its full value in money; thus increasing the possessions of the former, without detriment to his own interests. But, about three years after the death of the count, his son suddenly disappeared, nor did the efforts made to discover him, prove successful; the baron, however, still continued to administrate the estates.

Influenced by sundry private motives, Monsieur D'Argenson, the bailiff of the province, had long coveted the late count's château on the Erdre, and now made overtures to his executor, offering him great immediate pecuniary advantages to induce him to resign it into his hands. The baron, too much a man of honour to stoop to such means of aggrandizement, politely, though resolutely, declined the offers of the bailiff, who, seeing no possibility of compassing his ends by bribery, had recourse to a system of legal oppression, the more arbitrary and vexatious, that he kept within the strict letter of the law. Still, the baron resisted.

On the disappearance of the heir, D'Argenson, the bailiff of the province, endeavoured to establish that the property of the Count de St. Angin fell by escheat to the crown, and having detected an imaginary flaw in the documents by virtue of which the baron held his trust, commenced a law-suit against him; not so much with a hope of gaining

it, as with a view to protract its issue until the expenses incidental thereto should involve the baron in difficulties, from which he would be unable to extricate himself. In consequence of his rapid promotion, and of the very high favour he enjoyed at court, he commanded the venality of the judges to whom the decision was referred, being too generally feared to meet with opposition to his will; thus, his deep scheme partly succeeded; for, the baron, having carried on the suit against his powerful persecutor, until his own little fortune, with the intended dowry of his daughters had dwindled away, was at length compelled to borrow, on his own bond considerable sums from a notary at Paris; being unwilling to touch the accumulating revenues of his ward, the young Comte de St. Angin.

A short period before the commencement of this tale, the baron was disagreeably surprised by a morning visit from the notary, who apprised him, that being D'Argenson's debtor to a very large amount, and threatened by the latter with imprisonment, unless his claim was satisfied, he had been compelled, in the absence of other means, to tender his, the baron's bonds, in part payment, which securities had been accepted.

For the first time, De St. Auney feared D'Argenson; and whilst most perplexed as to the probable result of this step, he received a citation before the supreme court, to pay Monseigneur D'Argenson, lieutenant of police, certain sums advanced by him, upon bonds signed and sealed by Monsieur le Baron de St. Auney.

The latter determined to make the best use of the short time allowed for the payment of the claim, and repair at once to Paris. His daughters, with their nurse and a trusty domestic preceded him to the capital, for which he set out the day following their departure: exactly a fortnight after their arrival, their privacy was disturbed by the mysterious Capuchin already mentioned.

The sisters felt much alarmed at the non-arrival of their parent, who formed the subject of their conversation.

"I hope, sister Jeanne;" observed the younger maiden; "our dear father will be soon here. Dost think any thing has befallen him?"

"He is in the hands of Providence, dear Julie;" responded the elder sister; "the roads are bad at this time of the year; he may have been detained in consequence."

"But Antoine says," replied Julie, "that there has been plenty of time, notwithstanding; allowing a delay of three days, thou wilt acknowledge he might have arrived long before this."

"Thou art right Julie, and I have my misgivings as well as thou! I like not that D'Argenson—"

"D'Argenson? D'Argenson?" interrupted Prévôt; "the lieutenant of police! That's it—depend upon it, that's it."

"What?" asked the sisters in a breath.

"What?" retorted the matron—"didn't I tell you there was a man of the law, and knaves in the cards—I was sure of it—for it was a very *re*-markable—

"Prévot;" observed Jeanne, with a degree of severity she was not accustomed to assume; "thou should'st keep thy ill omens for those

The curtains slowly opened and disclosed the figure of a man of gigantic stature.

who believe in them; it is not kind to increase our anxiety on our father's account."

"My dear children," replied the dame; "I won't speak another word if it frets you; but I've my thoughts on the matter, I assure you."

"So have we our's," observed Jeanne; "our father is ever in them; night and morning we pray for his safe and speedy arrival. But, tell me, Julie; hast thou remarked, that the last two nights, three individuals have been prowling outside our house! I almost fancied, once, that the man who so affrighted us is one of them!"

Julie drew nearer to her sister, clinging instinctively to her for protection, the colour fading from her cheeks, and her countenance expressing the greatest alarm.

"Say not so sister Jeanne. Such another fright would kill me. But I thought too, as I looked out last night, that there was a suspicious stranger watching."

"I do not think we have any thing to fear; at least at night. Antoine assures me he is careful in making the doors and windows fast, so that if aught happen, we may hope for daylight to befriend us."

Whilst she was speaking, a low grating sound, apparently at the outside of the casement, became distinctly audible, and as she ended, a loud crash as of broken glass, made the two affrighted girls start from their seat; Julie, sunk upon her knees, her hands tightly grasping the slender waist of Jeanne; whilst the latter, scarcely less terrified, but preserving a slight portion of her presence of mind, attempted to reach the bell. The matron also fell on her knees, repeating her Pater-noster aloud, in a tremulous tone, as the curtains, slowly opening disclosed the figure of a man of gigantic stature, who making a sign imperative of silence, advanced with a firm step towards the terrified ladies.

"For heaven's sake!" stammered Jeanne; "what is the object of this untimely intrusion?"

The intruder unfolded a coarse, ample cloak in which his immense frame was enveloped, and respectfully saluting the speaker, placed a finger on his lips, at the same time drawing still nearer to the trembling group.

"Your father!" whispered he to Jeanne.

"What of him? what has happened to him? speak! for Heaven's sake speak!" and unable to support her fainting sister, Jeanne sunk back into the chair she had just quitted, and covering her face with her hands, burst into tears.

"Be calm;" continued the man; "I am a friend—though friends generally choose another entrance when they pay visits. Your father is well; you will see him again; before long, perhaps. Make no noise, or you will ruin all."

"But, Sir—I cannot conceive," continued Jeanne, partly recovering her self-possession, "the motive for this unwarrantable visit."

"To save you one still more unwelcome! Get off thy knees thou mumbling beldam," said he, addressing the affrighted Prevôt—"and instead of thy tongue, use thy hands and feet! See'st thou not yon maiden has fainted."

"Oh dear! oh dear! I said something would happen to us,"

exclaimed the matron, as admonished by the stranger she hastened to follow his injunctions. By the help of restoratives, Julie's senses gradually returned, but nearly fleeted a second time when she beheld the dark eyes, and the hard features of Jacques; for it was he.

"Jeanne? Jeanne! What is the matter?" cried she, almost inaudibly; still clinging to her sister; "why is that horrid man here?"

Jacques, smiling as he looked upon the pale beauty before him, answered. "'T is not flesh deep, damsel. And as to my business, it concerns one of you, who possessed a ring!"

"Where is it? Give it me!" rapidly exclaimed Julie, springing to her feet, and convulsively grasping Jacques' hard hand, between her own tiny delicate fingers.

"'T is not often so white a hand presses mine,' said he, gazing on it with admiration. "'T is an honest man's, although often compelled to do dishonest work. But since the ring is thine, thou must accompany me, for my errand is to thee."

Julie shrieked, and strove to release herself from Jacques, who, now firmly withheld her, whilst Jeanne, with despairing accents lent her vain efforts to accomplish the same end.

"'T is of no use maidens;" said he, "my orders are imperative;" and he now retained Jeanne also. "But, I would rather be buried fifty feet beneath the earth, than harm or betray such beauty."

"What mean you? monster in human form;" sobbed Jeanne; "loose me! If money is your object, you shall have all we possess."

"Money will neither purchase your liberty, nor ensure your life, if you resist. I tell you, damsel, my visit has a friendly object; I cannot tell you more. Confide in me; you shall find me true as honesty can make me."

Jeanne looked into Jacques' face, and beheld two large black eyes suffused with tears, apparently retained within their source only by an immense effort. Involuntarily, all doubt fled from her mind, although her reluctance to part from her sister overcame every other feeling:

"Whither thou goest, sister Julie, I will go too!" and Jeanne now loosened from the unwilling grasp of Jacques, folded her sister to her bosom, both shedding abundant tears.

Prevôt had disappeared.

"Trust thy sister to me, Mademoiselle; exclaimed Jaques, "I'll answer for her safety."

"But where are you going to take her?" sobbed Jeanne, interrupting him; "'T is torture to be kept in suspense."

"I am forbidden to say," replied he; "let that suffice until thou seest me again. And now, maiden; come!"

But Julie had swooned a second time; ere Jeanne could again attempt to restore her, Jacques bore her to the balcony; in another moment he was in the street, where a coach attended by two men, closely muffled, awaited him; placing his lovely burden inside, he followed, and closed the door as Jeanne appeared looking over from the casement above, totally unable to prevent the abduction of her sister.

"To the Bastile!" cried Jacques.

The coach swept rapidly away from the swimming eyes of Jeanne, who fell lifeless on the balcony.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WARNING, THE JOURNEY, AND THE ARREST.

About two leagues distant from the city of Nantes—celebrated for the edict which bears its name—nor less so, as the natal-place of the blood-renowned Fouché, Minister of the Police under Napoleon—stands a now dilapidated, though still inhabitable building, called Château la Gâcherie.

If few tourists are acquainted with the locality, it is because few possess any decided partiality for hunting out spots, unfrequented by the majority of pleasure-seekers; indeed, the château, in itself, can boast of little, either to recommend it to notice, or to repay the toil of a visit, more than the interest which attaches to it, as the residence of the good king Henri Quatre, at the period that he issued the edict of Nantes: a period, the most momentous of his reign—when, disobeying the very christian-like precept of intolerance, *then* inculcated by the most christian of christian religions, he extended to poor Protestants, the benefits of Purgatory and of Paradise in the next world, and those of peace in the present—defying, by the act, the astute hatred of the Jesuits—a hatred, which slept not until it had envenomed the heart, and sharpened the fanatic dagger of a Ravaillac.*

* L'Etoile gives the following curious particulars, connected with this memorable regicide. From the forty-eighth volume of his remarkable and erudite works, we translate, literally, the succeeding passages.

"At ten o'clock on Friday, the 14th day of the month of May, 1610—a sad and fatal day for France—the king went and heard mass at the Feuillans; on his return, he retired into his cabinet, whither came to him the Duke of Vendôme, his natural son, (whom he loved devotedly,) and informed him that a certain individual named La Brosse, who professed astrology, had told him, (the duke) that the constellation under which his Majesty was born, menaced him with some great danger on this day, and so he warned him to be on his guard. To which the king replied, laughing at M. de Vendôme: '*La Brosse is a cunning old fox, who wants to get money out of you; and you are a young fool to believe him. Our days are numbered before God.*' Upon this the Duke of Vendôme went and told all to the queen, who besought the king not to leave the Louvre, during the remainder of the day. He made her the same reply.

"After dinner, the king laid down on his bed, to sleep awhile; but, unable to taste the repose he sought, arose in low spirits, uneasy in mind, and absent, and

But, independently of its connection with early Protestant history, Château la Gâcherie possesses another feature, replete with interest of a different nature—viz: a memento of olden times—a link in the chain of historical incidents, connecting those ages with the present —a token of home—a reminiscence of glory passed away—a sign —the masonic sign of association—by which the traveller shall recognize the ancient fame of Britain, and suddenly conjure the mailed spirits of her bravest sons.

In the ogees of the turret windows, sculptured in white stone, may

having walked about in his apartment for a short time, again threw himself upon the bed. Still unable to sleep, he arose a second time, and asked the officer on duty, what time it was; he answered: '*Four o'clock, Sire,*' adding—'*Sire! your Majesty is, I perceive. melancholy and thoughtful. It would be better for your Majesty to take the air a little; it would revive your Majesty.*' '*Well thought of,*' answered the king; '*order my carriage to be got ready; I will go to the arsenal, and see the Duke de Sully, who is indisposed, and takes a bath to day.*

"The coach being ready, he left the Louvre, accompanied by the Duke de Montbazon, the Duke D'Espernon, Marshal de Lavardin, Roquelaure, La Force, Mirabeau and Lioncourt first equery. At the same time, he ordered the Sieur de Vitry, Captain of his guard, to repair to the palace, and hurry the preparatives making there for the Queen's entry, bidding his guard remain at the Louvre; so that the king was followed, only by a small number of gentlemen on horseback, and a few running footmen. Unfortunately, the carriage-doors were left open on each side, the weather being very fine, and the king wishing to see the preparatives making in the city. His carriage, on entering the *Rue de la Ferronnerie*, from the *Rue St. Honoré*, was obstructed, on one side, by a cart laden with wine, and on the other, by a second cart laden with hay, which preventing its progress, it was compelled to stop, because the street was very narrow, in consequence of the shops being built against the walls of the Cemetery of the St. Innocents.

"In this dilemma, the greater number of the footmen passed through the cemetery, in order to run more at their ease, and thus get in advance of the king's carriage, at the end of the street. Of two footmen, who had followed the carriage, one advanced to remove the obstruction, and the other stooped to tie up his garter; when a wretch, escaped from hell, called François Ravaillac, a native of Angoulême, who had had time, during this delay, to remark on which side the king was seated, got upon the wheel of the carriage, and with a knife, sharpened on both sides, dealt him a blow between the second and third ribs, a little above the heart, which caused the king to exclaim '*I am wounded!*' But the villain, nothing daunted, struck him a second blow, which reached his heart, and of which the king expired, without being able to raise a single cry; he only drew one long breath. This second blow was followed up by a third; so animated was this parricide against his king; but this last blow, only pierced the sleeve of the Duke de Montbazon.

"The most surprising fact, is, that not one of the noblemen in the carriage with the king, beheld him struck; and had this hellish monster thrown away his knife, the crime could not have been attributed to any one, particularly. But he remained there, as though he wished to show himself to the people, and to take to himself alone, the odious glory of the greatest of crimes."

It may be as well to state, that the Feuillans, mentioned by the venerable historian, was a convent, where the members of a religious order, of the same name, were wont to assemble. They observed the rules of the order of St. Bernard. There existed also, a political society, which assumed the same appellation, and, at a later period, held their meetings in this same convent.

The site of the cemetery of the St. Innocents, is now occupied by a market, called the Market of the Innocents, (*Marché des Innocens*) or more commonly, the HALLE.

be seen, the arms of England, having the Gallic spear-heads or *fleurs-de-lys*, in the quarterings. Tradition traces the castle into the temporary possession of the third Edward of England, whilst his victorious arms were laying haughty Gallia waste, and into that of his heroic son, who, after his sire's victory at Poictiers, here entertained the royal John of France, and Charles, his heir; the projectors of the Bastile: at a later period, its hospitable roof afforded an asylum, to the unfortunate Margaret of Anjou.

The château stands in a hollow, on the banks of the Erdre—a rivulet, which, some distance below, falls into the Sêvres, above the confluence of the latter stream with the Loire. It is a massive edifice, built of red stone, the walls being surmounted by a coping of the same, hewn into huge blocks, and united by clamps of iron and cement: the two wings of which it consists, enclose a lofty white tower, (situated to the west) embrasured, and overtopped by a platform; the southern wing containing the apartments allotted to winter use; the northern, those inhabited in summer. Eastward, stand the out-houses; and behind the château itself, is a long, wide avenue of majestic horse-chesnut trees, whose intricate branches and sombre foliage, afford shelter to thousands of the fledged race, offering, in the heat of a southern summer, a deliciously cool and secluded retreat, to the over-pressed wayfarer. The Erdre surrounds the whole building, as also its adjacent land—except one narrow strip near the great white tower which defends it—two draw-bridges affording the inhabitants the means of communication with the country, in common with a lane, or by-road, leading to Nantes.

At the period of this tale, it formed the residence of the Baron de St. Auney and of his household, comprising his two daughters, Prévôt their nurse, Antoine his oldest servant, Jerôme his steward, father Anselm his chaplain, with sundry domestics, male and female, in all fourteen persons; the family occupying the southern wing, (the northern, and the tower having been shut up as superfluous for a dwelling), whilst a chapel, situated at the entrance of the latter, served as the devotional resort of the whole household.

From Nantes to the château, the road is nothing more than a rugged traverse path, narrow and winding—cut into deep ruts, by the passage of an occasional cart or waggon, obstructing every approach to even moderate progression, by entrapping, in the soft soil, the foot of man and beast. But in this region—justly styled the garden of France—the richness of the vegetation imparts liveliness to the solitude, and the way-farer journeys onwards, heedless of stumbles, falls or dislocations: peeping through the ragged, broken hedges of holly and poplar-trees, may be seen, marshalled in long rank and file, the well-trimmed dwarf vines, upholding innumerable close-set bunches of luscious grape, which smack of midnight orgies and morning head-aches—beyond these, square patches of cultivated sorrel, or broad spinach-fields, relieved, here and there, by beds of gaudy poppies, whose scarlet crest, replete with drowsiness, yielding

to the gentle breath of the summer zephyr, nod—nod—nod to the passer-by, with all the gravity of wakeful somnolency: every now and then, too, thrushes and nightingales, suddenly stopping short in the midst of a mellifluous cadence, will start out from the nearest bushes, and with a loud whirr, take wing to a more secluded shelter, as the tread of a foot, or the snorting of a horse, warns them of a stranger's approach. Winter's touch dissolves the charm: life is extinguished from the scene—the solitude remains undisturbed—the trees and bushes, shivering in their nakedness, communicate to the lonely wanderer, a portion of their own misery—the very birds, forsake their usual haunts, and, in large flights, travel to a clime, more congenial to their habits and necessities.

Bidding them adieu, and commending them to the care of Providence, and to that of the worthy Prévôt and old Antoine, the Baron de St. Auney, embraced his fair daughters, and as soon as the vehicle containing them, had disappeared, turned his horse's head into the by-road leading from Nantes to the château, whither he now returned, to make his own preparatives for his expedition to Paris.

The night set in, cold and stormy—a shower of sleet, too, commenced falling thick and fast, thawing as it reached the ground, and rendering the baron's journey, one of extreme discomfort: onward he sped through the gloom—every minute growing more tangible—his thoughts, however, following an opposite direction, for these wandered after his children: stopping with them at every relay, he traced their progress towards the great city—now defended them from imaginary dangers—now pictured them arrived in safety—never, before, had he beheld them so beautiful—never loved them so tenderly—never, before, forestalled the fading of the tender flowers, which he had reared, and seen blossom—never experienced a foretaste of the bitter agony that attends bereavement, even in anticipation—never had his heart beaten so violently, as now, never had he felt less a man—and whilst offering up a prayer to heaven—a silent prayer, for their safety, he found the hot tears scalding his cheek—tears, that spoke volumes for the father's tenderness. Still, faster and faster onwards, he urged his horse—and faster and faster crowded the thoughts upon his mind—now hopes, now fears—now visions of future happiness—now a gloomy perspective, with his enemy, D'Argenson, in the back-ground, mocking him, weeping over the wreck of his fortunes—then, they rapidly brought him back to the present, to the eve of his intended journey to the capital; and then, he weighed his chances of success against those of his foe—again, his daughters flitted before him, like phantoms, and again did he lose himself in a labyrinth of fears and hopes concerning them—when, in the midst of one of these reveries, his horse suddenly stopped, and loudly snorted: the baron found himself outside of the gate leading to the château.

"Oh! Monsieur le Baron!" exclaimed the porter, as he threw open the gate; "I am so glad you are come back! I was afraid something

would happen to you, before you reached home. Monsieur D'Argenson has been here."

"Monsieur D'Argenson!" ejaculated the baron, faltering—a presentiment of ill creeping over him, as the hated name sounded in his ears: "Monsieur D'Argenson? when—when did he come? art thou sure?"

"Did I say, Monsieur D'Argenson? no! somebody from him; Monsieur le Baron."

"Tut, man! speak! what dost thou mean?" retorted the baron, with more impatience than he was accustomed to exhibit: "thou art surely muddled! Who has been here?"

Well! Monsieur le Baron! it was a short time after you left, this morning; I think it was about two hours after—I wont be certain though"—

Giving his horse the spur, and ejaculating an *ugh* of impatience, intended for his garrulous dependant, the baron hastened towards the château, and immediately on his arrival, summoned Jerôme.

"What man was that, who came here in my absence?" inquired he, with an unusual aspect of sternness.

Jerôme looked at his master, for a few moments, with mute astonishment; then, shaking his head, replied:

"What man? Monsieur le Baron!"

"*What* man?" responded the latter, hurriedly: "why, the man from Monsieur D'Argenson! what did he want? when did he come?"

"Indeed, Monsieur le Baron;" replied the puzzled domestic—half inclined to suspect, either that he had left his own senses below, or that his worthy master had lost *his*, somewhere on the road—"indeed, I know of no strange man that has been here: old Thomas must have made a mistake."

"Go, quickly! bid some one fetch him hither," said the baron; who, as Jerôme disappeared, commenced pacing the apartment; seemingly anxious to walk down his impatience, ere the messenger returned.

But he did not wait long: old Thomas, finding that his eloquence had failed in its effect—in plainer terms—that he had been unable to make himself fully understood, had followed in his master's steps, as quickly as his gouty legs and their be-bunioned terminations permitted, and had nearly gained the mansion, when his locomotive speed received a sudden impetus from Jerôme's impatient Mercury, who, catching him by the arm, ushered him at once into the presence.

It was a sore trial for Thomas to stand, face to face, on the same level as his master—not, however, that he cared so very much about standing before him, provided he could only do it out of doors—in the path—in his lodge—at the gate—in fact, any where else but *there*—where he then stood—in the drawing-room—up in that small corner—into which he had squeezed himself, out of the

way—with chairs to the right, and chairs to the left—with a large table before him, and a small table behind him, and another large table in the middle of the apartment—surrounded, too, by enframed faces —some of which he had seen alive—faces, with most extraordinary eyes, which, bent upon his own, pertinaciously followed them in every direction, as if determined to stare him out of countenance—*him*, upright, upon a floor so highly polished, that he could count every indentation made therein by his hob-nailed shoes—and so slippery, besides, that he almost felt it slide away from under his feet—then, to crown all—rendering his uneasiness still greater—there was fixed, immediately in front of him, a large mirror, in which he could see another Thomas, a perfect fac-simile of himself—staring upwards, and downwards, and around, and about—and colouring up—and coughing—and rubbing down his hair—and pulling up his collar—and tweedling his cap about—then letting it drop—then picking it up—and looking so vacantly at Thomas the first, that he inwardly concluded, Thomas the second must be a fool.

Naturally of a benevolent disposition, the baron could not, without an approach to a smile, witness his humble servant's embarrassment: turning round, as much to indulge his humour, as to afford Thomas an opportunity of taking courage, he poured out a tumbler of wine, and handing it to his servitor, commenced:

"Drink *that*, Thomas: then tell me what this stranger said!"

Shuffling forwards over the polished floor, towards the baron—much after the fashion of a parrot, progressing over a mahogany table—Thomas received the goblet from his master, and with a trembling hand, and a face, purple as the liquid he was about to imbibe, first bobbed his head at the donor; then, stammering out: "Your good health, Monsieur le Baron!" emptied the contents of the aforesaid goblet, into his throat, gazing intently, the whole time, at Thomas the second.

But the inspiriting draught failed to produce the customary effect upon the old porter, who, still more confounded at his presumption in drinking before his master—at his express desire too—and overwhelmed, moreover, by this mark of condescension on the part of the latter, now stood, with his distorted cap in one hand, and his empty glass in the other, vainly looking around for a friendly spot on which to set it down; bethinking himself, all at once, he at length deposited it upon the ground, letting his cap fall, in his attempts to regain as near an approach to the perpendicular position, as respect for the presence of the baron would allow him to assume.

"So! Thomas;" observed the good-natured nobleman, perceiving how matters stood: "so! this man told you, he came from Monsieur d'Argenson?"

"Well! n—no! n—no—! ye—yes; that is—he said, Monsieur le Baron"—stammered Thomas—"he asked, whether you were gone! that is, if you had started for Paris."

"Hum!" ejaculated the baron, thoughtfully; "and this individual came this morning; *after* my departure for Nantes?"

"About a couple of hours, my lord;" replied the dependant, gaining confidence: "as near as I can guess, it was about noon; for the good wife was just going to take up the soup for dinner. We always dine at——"

Interrupting the old porter, ere he could detail the domestic economy of his lodge, the baron continued:

"What reply dids't thou make to his inquiry?"

"Well! Monsieur le Baron!" resumed Thomas; "I could n't understand him; that is, he rather mystified me—for he asked me whether your lordship intended returning to the château, before your lordship set out for Paris, or, whether your lordship was going on to Paris, direct; and so, please your lordship, as he seemed to know all about your lordship's movements, I thought I had better tell the truth—so I told him, that your lordship would return to night, to the château."

"But what about D'Argenson? what said he of him?" exclaimed the baron.

"Well! Monsieur le Baron! I will tell you that presently. I did n't like his appearance much, for he looked like a *mouchard*; * so I asked him what he wanted to know for—and how he had got into the grounds of the château—as it was my duty to do, your lordship—for I am very particular in my duty as porter, please your lordship—but he didn't answer one of my questions—all he said was this: tell Monsieur le Baron, to beware of Paris, and of D'Argenson! and then, please your lordship, he galloped off, and was out of sight immediately."

Having delivered this lengthy account of the stranger's visit—the recital of which, under existing circumstances, and to so exalted a personage as the baron—threw him into a profuse perspiration. Thomas's bald pate underwent a series of paralytic nods, intended for his master, but which were, in reality, directed only *at* him, and *towards* the other bald Thomas in the glass; who, between each inclination, appeared assiduously engaged in sopping up the aqueous beads, which the effort of speaking had expressed from every pore of his counterpart's head and face—he having converted his cap into a temporary sponge, for this unanticipated and portentous occasion.

The worthy baron listened, with profound attention, to the latter portion of the old porter's harangue, remaining, for some minutes, plunged in a deep reverie; only interrupting the current of his thoughts by ejaculating, from time to time: "beware of Paris, and of D'Argenson!" and apparently unconscious of old Thomas's

* The terms *mouchard and espion*, though answering to the English word, spy, are not synonymous; *espion*, signifies a *political* spy, in the usual acceptation; but *mouchard*, one employed specially, by the *police*: it is a most insulting epithet.

presence, or of the torture to which his silence was subjecting him.

A succession of uncomfortable short coughs from the old man, awakened the baron from his fit of temporary forgetfulness; remarking his domestic's embarrassment, he said, rather abruptly, yet, in his customary gentle tone:

"If thou hast nothing more to say, Thomas, thou cans't go: call at the stables, on thy way, and bid them prepare every thing for my journey: tell Pierre I shall start at five tomorrow morning."

Bidding the baron a good night, the two Thomases saluted each other very respectfully; but the original shadow, turning round, (naturally enough) in order to make his exit through the door, and forgetting, the proximity to his feet, of the glass goblet, encountered it on his passage, and imparted to it such an impulsion, that it flew off from the point of junction, with centrifugal violence, until its onward progress received a check from the oaken door, whence it rebounded, shivered into atoms, into the middle of the apartment.

Scarcely could the good baron maintain his gravity, on seeing the unlucky Thomas, scramble, on all fours, after the fragments, muttering all the while, the most angry exclamations against his own awkwardness; having, however, in an incredibly short space of time, succeeded in collecting the shining morsels into his cap, and without daring again to turn his eyes towards his master, the old porter, by a desperate effort, gained the outside of the door; nor, once fairly out, did he diminish his speed, until safely housed within his own lodge.

After half an hour, spent in deciding upon his itinerary, the baron summoned Jerôme, and communicated the mysterious intelligence that he had just learnt from old Thomas. Jerôme attempted to dissuade his master from repairing to Paris unattended, but the intrepid baron, nothing daunted, felt it would be weakness to allow his decision to be over-ruled by the cautious advice of his faithful steward. Giving the latter his instructions, for the proper regulation of the château, during his temporary absence, and handing him an address, to which he was to forward an epistle, once a week, he further charged him to keep a strict watch for strangers, any of whom, found trespassing within the precincts of the domain, were to be arrested, and lodged in the white tower, and due notice of the proceeding, transmitted to him, to Paris, immediately.

Ere he retired to rest, the baron collected the documents necessary to establish an appeal against D'Argenson's claim, adding to them, such as he considered essential to prove his own heirship to the estates of the late Count de St. Angin, his relative, in the event of the discovery of any authentic data respecting the death of the real heir. All of these, with the sum necessary for his journey, and for his expenditure at Paris, he enclosed in a small tin case, and having completed the necessary preparations for his departure before dawn, retired to taste a few hours of repose.

But, notwithstanding the fatigues of the day, and the prospect of a long and weary journey, it was long ere the baron fell into oblivi-ousness of life, and of the purpose to which he had devoted the better portion of his days. Then the words: "Beware of Paris and of D'Argenson," haunted his ears; and as he pursued each weary league of his intended route, even to the gates of Paris, the face of his bitter foe peered into his, from each bush—each tree—each dark corner of the road, grinning at him with the malignity of a fiend, as he in vain endeavoured to elude his penetrating gaze, and to deliver his daughters from the snares, which his overwrought fancy beheld laid, to entrap their unsuspecting nature. He could feel some palpable danger impending over him; he grew conscious of making gigantic efforts to avert it—but, like a powerless man struggling to stem the current of a deep rapid torrent, became also sensible, that his strength failed him at every successive effort, and that he was gradually sinking beneath the mass of waters. In vain he essayed to attach a determinate signification to the friendly warning of the mysterious stranger. Of D'Argenson he knew he must beware—but what terrible fatality should render Paris, an object of dread—a spot to be shunned by the traveller—a spot fraught with hidden danger to himself, and which he must, notwithstanding, encounter, or risk the welfare of his daughters! It was perhaps an artifice, this pretended danger against which he had been cautioned—a snare, laid to deter him from undertaking the expedition, that, by his non-appearance, D'Argenson might compel the Judges of the Supreme Court, to pronounce sentence against him by default. He must go—go he would—he is on his road—he has reached Paris—already his daughters are smiling on him—suddenly a hand weighs heavily upon his shoulder, and a voice utters:

"'Tis half past four, Monsieur le Baron."

He awoke: Jerôme was standing by his bed-side.

As the old tower-bell chimed five, the baron, attended by Pierre, his groom, set out, on horseback, from the château. Late the same evening, he reached Tours, whence he dismissed Pierre, back to La Gâcherie, with his (the baron's) horse, intending to continue his journey to Paris, in the public conveyance. Accordingly, he secured a seat in a lumbering machine, styled a *coche*, (since, by way of contrast to the sloth-like nature of its movements, called a diligence) at this period, performing one painful transit to the capital, once a week: fortunately for the baron's convenience, it started the next morning; before dawn of which, it had commenced its rumbling progress, and within six and thirty hours, arrived at the barrier, forming the entrance into Paris.

As the conductor approached the same, he commenced blowing, with the whole strength of his lungs, into a small brass horn, expressing therefrom a multiplicity of notes, that, together, compounded a well-known popular air; called, "*le bon Roi Dagobert;*" the postillions, emulous of his musical skill, performing an *obligato*

accompaniment on the whip, consisting of a series of cracks—which accompaniment is, to this day, still perpetrated by their modern rivals.

The horses, of their own accord, stopped at the gate; the postillions and the conductor, descended from their respective perches; the former, repairing to the nearest wine-shop, for the purpose of imbibing their morning dram; whilst the latter sought the official, stationed at the guard-house appertaining to the barrier.

"Good morning, comrade;" said this functionary to his periodical friend, at the same time holding out his hand.

"The same to you, master Philip;" responded the conductor; acknowledging the friendly salutation, as he shook the sleet from his coat and cap; "we've got the winter, early! any news?"

"Only two men going to be executed at the Grêve, this morning, for robbing the Père Dubois."

"I shall be just in time," replied the conductor, handing to the official, a small packet of papers: "get those examined quickly, will you? I would n't lose the sight for a crown piece."

As master Philip took the papers, a third individual joined them, and commenced inspecting the documents. Having conned them over, and noted the particulars of the pass-ports, he returned them, all but one, to the conductor; observing: "*these* are in rule;" and disappeared into the guard-house.

"Something wrong, master Philip;" ejaculated the conductor to his friend.

"They have been waiting all night;" responded the latter, in a half-whisper, jerking his head in the direction of the guard-house: "who is it? do you know?"

Before he could receive any answer, however, the inspector of the pass-ports re-appeared, followed by an officer of musketeers, and by three soldiers of the same corps. On a sign from their superior, the conductor opened the door of the *coche*, in the *coupè* of which sat the baron, totally unsuspicious of the nature of the delay; the officer bowed, as he scrutinised the worthy nobleman's features, and exhibiting a sealed parchment, exclaimed:

"Monsieur le Baron de St. Auney! I arrest you, in the name of the king. Here is a lettre-de-cachet!"

Ere the baron could shake off the icy thrill which overcame him, on perceiving the fatal document, two of the soldiers advanced, tendering a hand to assist him in alighting, and preceded by their officer, conducted him, at once, into the guard-house, whilst the third, directed by the conductor, secured the prisoner's baggage.

Many were the explanatory glances interchanged between master Philip and the conductor, and silent and ominous the whisperings of the postillions, as the unfortunate nobleman disappeared: but curiosity to witness the forthcoming execution at the Grêve, getting the better of his sympathy for his late passenger's arrest, Jehu hurriedly

clambered into his box—the postillions resumed their seat—the affrighted passengers withdrew their heads from the windows, and commenced, forthwith, a series of comments upon the adventure—master Philip once more saluted his friend—again the brazen horn detailed the good King Dagobert's colloquy with the great St. Eloi—again the postillions' whips executed their noisy accompaniment, and again the heavy vehicle rolled onwards, towards its destination.

In the course of half an hour, a conveyance drove up to the door of the guard-house: into it, the baron was motioned to ascend, being closely followed by the officer, who seated himself by his side: having delivered the prisoner's effects into the custody of the driver, the subordinates saluted their superior, and the coach drove off in the direction of the Bastile. It reached the sombre edifice, without the exchange of a word between the baron and his capturer; and, without the usual preliminary examination, De St. Auney was consigned to the dungeon, known as No. 2 La Bertaudière.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BARON DE ST. AUNEY ASSISTED, IN THE HOUR OF NEED, BY A FRIEND IN DEED.

Abandoned to his reflections, the unhappy baron began to trace the finger of D'Argenson, directing the machinations, which had ended in confining him, his victim, within a dungeon of the redoubtable Bastile St. Antoine. He could now perceive, that he had been gradually entrapped in a web, which his arch-enemy had silently woven about him—he could distinctly remember each individual act, at the time unheeded, by which he had unwittingly placed himself in his power—with painful acuteness, his memory dwelt upon the signs, the nods, the glances, exchanged between certain of his people at Château la Gâcherie as the truth flashed upon his mind, that he had been surrounded by spies. Unsuspicious by nature, he had not, at the time, remarked these intelligential signals—nor attached importance to the disappearance of one or two waiting-men, a very few weeks previous to his misfortune—he had not, until the present moment, even suspected the agency of the notary—but now, he

could see through all—and as he reflected upon his present misery, in some measure, the consequence of his own imprudence—and upon the calamities it must inevitably entail upon the head of his innocent girls, he loudly cursed his irresolution and lack of fore-sight, which had withheld him from seeking, earlier, the redress he now, but vainly sought, at the hand of majesty.

But, the current of his thoughts was often partially diverted, by an unwitting observance of his place of confinement: for, although absorbed in the consciousness of the full extent of his misfortune, he could not avoid embracing, with his mind's eye, the contracted dimensions—the dingy, comfortless furniture—the very minutiæ of his den: it was a kind of under-current of thought, pertinaciously running *one* way—upon the materialism of the present, whilst his whole soul, like a main-stream, flowed in another direction, rapidly comprising the certain past, the tangible present—and the speculative future.

And may we not, to this *under-current* of thought, attribute those peculiarities which characterize the human mind; and whence arise those shades, which so eminently particularize one individual from another?

Is not *it* the source of those glimpses of reason, that, like the electric flash from the black cloud, so often dart forth from an intellect overwhelmed in the main-current of insanity?

Is not *it* the source of the apparent rationality with which the idiot pursues his trivial amusements—of the methodical arrangements that a maniac is known to adopt, when his broken mind has conceived a plan of escape from his irksome confinement?

May not, to its influence, be traced those flashes of wit—those traits of satire—those sudden bursts of oratory—which enliven the discourses of senators—of statesmen—nay, the common parlance of the *beaux-esprits* of an age, and which, though perhaps alien to their *subject*, are not foreign to the *occasion* which calls them into unexpected existence?

Is not *it* the origin of those oddities of speech—of conduct—of that abstraction of mind, for which certain individuals are so remarkable; and whence they derive their title to eccentricity?

In fine; is it not in obedience to an under-current of thought, by which he is, involuntarily, carried along in a direction opposed to the main-current of the same, that are due those observations, irrelative to his subject matter, which an author obtrudes upon his readers? To it, also, and to its further operation, must be attributed the apology, which on such occasions, he deems prudent to offer—totally incompetent, however, to judge whether the apology will be considered equivalent to the affront.

The prisoner in No. 2 La Bertaudière, after spending a considerable time in pacing to and fro the narrow den, whose walls formed the boundary of his solitary oscillations, sat down upon the miserable, dirty pallet, intended to form his couch at night, and began to ponder over

the uncertainty of his destiny. Escape, there was none! No hope of it—not even a distant hope, entered his brain:—his liberation, too, was uncertain—perhaps never would take place; for he had heard of such things as *sudden deaths* occuring to the unfortunate inmates of the fortress, of which he was now an inhabitant, as also of these, lingering out the natural term of their life, in protracted expectation of speedy liberty—he shuddered, as he measured the power that his adversary now possessed over him—the power of life or death,* and enumerated his multitudinous opportunities of exercising it, either way, as he judged most expedient, to the furtherance of his vengeance or his interest.

He anticipated the employment of extremes, conscious that D'Argenson, actuated by self-interest to keep him confined until after the expiration of the term allowed him to appear before the Supreme Court, would, this point gained, even violate every principle of justice and right, to keep him incarcerated as long as it suited his ulterior views, of what nature soever these might be.

He knew D'Argenson sought the reversion of the estates of the late Count de St. Angin; he could perceive, that, unsuccessful in establishing his claim to the same, he had inveigled him, through the notary's agency, into his present dilemma, and now sought, by incarcerating him, to involve him deeper in difficulties, into which his own excessive delicacy had, originally, plunged him. The loss of his papers, which, with his valuables had been taken from him on entering the Bastile, preyed heavily upon his mind, inasmuch as he found himself, all at once deprived of the indispensable documents, as of the means, whereby his heirship to the D'Angin estates could be established, or the pretensions of D'Argenson frustrated. He half regretted, that, ere matters attained to their present crisis, he had not presumed upon his right of heirship, by the death, real or supposed,

* The interior government of the Bastile has been detailed; but, although the Governor was invested with the supreme authority, *within* the Château, he was subject to that of the Lieutenant of Police, the first magistrate in the kingdom, and who, as such, literally possessed the power over the prisoners, of life or of death.

In his historical description of the city of Paris, Monsieur Piganiol de la Force, gives the following curious particulars connected with the creation of the charge of Lieutenant of Police.

"The charge of Lieutenant-General of Police was created in March, 1667, before which time, M. Colbert had established a Council of Police, which held its sittings once a week, at the Chancellor Seguier's, and was composed of the Chancellor, M. Colbert, several Councillors of State, the Lieutenant Criminal and Civil of the Châtelet, and the King's Procurator. This Council voted the necessary sums for the due repair of the public fountains, for the lighting of the city with candles, lamps, and lanterns, and for the maintenance of the Horse and Foot Brigades. Once a week, the Commissaries of the several quarters of the city, personally rendered to the Council, an account of all the occurrences within their jurisdiction. It was at length resolved to appoint a Chief of Police, but as the authority of the Civil Lieutenant of Police was already too extensive, the King abolished the office and created another, *viz*: that of Lieutenant-General of the Police of the Kingdom, with the functions, of which he invested M. DE LA REYNIE."

of the late Count's son, to raise upon the title-deeds of the property, a sum sufficient to cancel the debt due to the notary, and thus place himself without the pale of D'Argenson's astute persecution; then, again, he consoled himself with the reflection, that had he violated his strict sense of justice, his conscience would have refused him its support in the hour of trial, when he must have sunk, overwhelmed by mental agony, ere hope came to his relief.

For his personal discomforts and troubles, he cared less, than for the pain and anxiety that his mysterious disappearance must occasion his daughters, and for the dangers to which the loss of their natural protector would expose them—he became almost frantic as he grew more alive to the impracticability of transmitting them any intelligence concerning his position, and, with the calmness of despair, ruminated on the few chances left him, of again folding them to his heart; at least, until D'Argenson should have exhausted his virulence, by ruining the object of it, or by rendering both life and liberty valueless to him.

However, in the midst of these conflicting thoughts, would hope, like an *ignis-fatuus*, now and then glimmer across the gloomy track they were pursuing, and, in intervals such as these, when his mental anguish appeared suspended for a season, the old man's eyes, suffused with tears, would be directed towards Heaven, whilst a convulsive sob would interrupt the passage of a brief prayer to the Great Director of human events; a prayer for the safety of his unprotected daughters—a prayer, not pronounced perhaps—nay, not even clothed in words—yet, spoken by his heart, with all the mental fervor—all the devotion, of a servant resigned to the guidance of a Supreme Power.

If he knelt not—his soul was not the less humble.

Whilst deeply engaged in these silent prayers, the gloomy quietude of his place of confinement was suddenly disturbed by the noise of heavy footsteps. He listened — the sounds became more distinct; at length, the massive iron doors of his den slowly opened, and an individual entered, whom we must introduce to the Reader.

He was a short square man, with a large head, set upon a neck that a Hercules might have owned; without a neckcloth (this appendage being superseded by a quantity of black hair which flourished in a luxuriant crop beneath and around it), his muscular throat was exposed in all its capillary proportions, the large veins, swollen, apparently almost to bursting; his hair, thick and curly, particularly lustrous, and, coal-black in colour, grew low down upon a compressed, knotty forehead, two angular protuberances of which, formed sockets for a pair of small grey eyes, the whites of which were blood-shot, and the lids inflamed; the eye-brows had been totally burnt off; a hawk-nose, the tip of which almost touched his unshaven upper lip; high cheek-bones, and a square, prominent, and bony chin, terminating upwards in a thick nether lip, imparted a sin-

gular character of decision and firmness, to a countenance devoid of every expression, save that of the basest passions of human nature.

His squat frame was encased in a dirty buff jerkin, confined around his waist by a broad leathern girdle, fastened in front by a large buckle, whilst, from the girdle itself, depended an enormous bunch of keys. A cast-off pair of cavalry boots, completed the costume of Ru, the *porte-clefs*, or turnkey, of the tower called La Bertaudière.

Entering the baron's cell, with a heavy, shuffling step, he carefully locked the door, casting an inquiring glance around, as if to ascertain the prisoner's safety, and forthwith proceeded to an obscure angle of the den, whence he drew forth a low table, black with filth, and with the grease of unnumbered meals untouched. From the interior of a capacious basket, which, on entering, he had deposited on the ground—he next extracted a lump of bread—brown as the coarsest meal, bad baking, and unleavened dough could make it—a small bottle of wine, a hollow platter—into which he poured a certain quantity of liquid meant to represent soup, and a second small tin platter, on which appeared a few solitary lumps of baked meat. These condiments he arranged in due order—that is to say, without order at all—upon the small table aforesaid: then, without breaking silence, made for the door.

The baron watched Ru's proceedings, without attempting to interrupt them; indeed, he had not an opportunity, as the whole of these preparations were concluded within a space of three minutes; but when he beheld his jailer about to leave him again to solitude, he could not resist his impulse to speak; in a voice, tremulous with nervous excitement, he hurriedly exclaimed, as Ru laid his hand on the door—

"Stay, man! for pity's sake, stay *a moment!*"

Ru shook his head, and without turning aside, unlocked the door, inserting his body, backwards, through the opening thus effected for his egress. The baron arose, ejaculating as he made a step towards the retreating form of his jailer, —

"Tell me—I implore you—what is the hour of the day."

But the door was suddenly closed in his face, probably because the jailer feared an attempt at escape. The baron stood a moment, petrified with disgust, and then returned to his pallet, upon which, however, he had scarcely reseated himself, when his prison-door was a second time cautiously opened, and Ru again appeared in the aperture. Not a muscle of his face moved; but holding up both hands, extending the ten digital prolongations of his immense palms, he gave a kind of low grunt or snarl, as if to engage the Baron's attention to his telegraphy, then, dropping his hands, held up one finger, renewed the communicative grunt, and immediately disappeared; a moment after, the bolt of the lock shot back into its socket with a loud clang — and the receding steps of Ru, accompanied by the

same heavy tramp that was the forerunner of his appearance, smote the unhappy baron's ear, distinctly telling him that he remained the sole, the solitary occupant of the Bertaudiére tower.

He had, now, not broken his fast for more than twelve hours, and, notwithstanding the unsavouriness of the viands placed for his consumption, nature craved after her customary sustenance; so, drawing the small table nearer to his wretched bed, for, contrary to custom, there was no chair, he attempted to swallow a portion of the soup. It was, however, too nauseous; his stomach rejected the dose. His next attempt was upon the meat—but again did his palate turn, for, setting aside the wretched culinary operation which it had undergone, the quality of the food itself was such as rendered it totally unfit for nutriment. He then attacked the bread and the wine—which, each in turn, were alike repudiated. He had not yet reached that point of famishment, which enabled the other inmates of the Bastile to greedily devour their scanty portion, notwithstanding the loathing of their stomach.

His limbs, too, were benumbed with cold, for it was the middle of November, and the winter had set in earlier than usual; not that the weather was particularly severe, without, but within the thick walls of the Bastile, the dungeons had contracted, from lack of ventilation, an habitual and unwholesome dampness, which, even in summer, rendered the middle stories, cold; as these were very seldom, some, in fact, never, warmed by a fire, they were, in winter, more like ice-houses, than tenements for humanity.

A long, narrow slit, left open in the solid masonry, was the only aperture, besides the chimney, which admitted air; the light of day being almost excluded; for, the Governor, in a freak of ill-will towards the previous occupant, had caused planks to be so fixed, outside, as to block up the space originally destined to allow a tiny gleam of the sunshine to penetrate into the cell.

After many vain attempts to restore the animal warmth of his aged frame, by walking backwards and forwards within a space of fourteen feet by twelve, the baron threw himself upon the bed, and at length succeeded in snatching a little repose. But, even this respite from his present cares, was of short duration, for, disturbed by dreams, in which he beheld D'Argenson, his daughters, himself, and others, engaged in a fray of which he could comprehend neither the commencement nor the end, he would start up, at intervals, in a state of intense mental agony, until exhausted nature again threw him into partial somnolency.

On awaking from one of these fits, he beheld Ru at his bed-side; he had brought a light, together with six small logs of wood, which, having ignited, crackled in the hearth, casting out a volume of pungent vapour, against which the jailer himself could with difficulty contend—every now and then coughing it up from his husky throat, with a vociferous hem.

As the baron arose, Ru withdrew, pointing to the fire and to a

second course of viands, which he had placed by the side of the first—yet intact—and, as on his first visit, gained the door, immediately after executing his errand.

From De St. Auney's knowledge of his jailer's obstinate taciturnity, he felt certain no verbal answer would be returned to his questions, but, notwithstanding, renewed his inquiry as to the hour of the day, making, however, no attempt to follow his jailer.

The latter, seeing his prisoner so tractable, stopped short as he attained the door of the cell, and held up, first his right hand, extending the fingers, then, the thumb of his left; this feat performed, he placed both hands over his mouth, first making a sign of its being sewed up, and withdrew as abruptly as before.

The mess that Ru had brought, was the same as the morning meal, except the soup; the baron, therefore, did not feel disposed to renew his attempts upon the edibles, in spite of his faintness every moment increasing, for lack of nourishment.

He remained up, until the last log was reduced to ashes, when he again threw himself upon his pallet, in order if possible to sleep till morrow, hoping a change in his diet would then enable him to take a little sustenance. Strange to say—he *did* sleep, and soundly, nor did he awake, until aroused by the grating of the key in the lock of his cell-door.

It was Ru! This functionary stepped across to the table, placed *under it*, a pitcher of water, and upon it, a mess of lentils and a morsel of bread, taking no notice whatever of the prisoner; he, however, perceived that the victuals of the preceding day was untouched, and commenced a scrutiny of the wine, by holding the bottle up between himself and the lamp which he had brought with him, for it was scarcely daylight; having satisfied his curiosity in this particular, he looked at the baron, sitting up in his bed, and shrugged up his shoulders, shaking his head at the same time, with an air of astonishment at an inmate of the Bastile refusing such food as was there provided for his especial eating.

The whole of these manœuvres were achieved in so limited a time, that De St. Auney was scarcely aware of Ru's presence, ere the latter was again on the point of disappearing. As on the two former occasions, the baron attempted to renew his question, but was stopped by the telegraphic communication of his jailer, who seemed alive to his prisoner's wish. Holding up his right hand, and displaying his five digits, he as rapidly closed them, then, extended the two ossifications of the same hand; after which, he withdrew, locking the door after him.

The Baron de St. Auney arose, parched with thirst, and powerless from exhaustion. He detected by the smell, the presence of his morning's ration, and even ventured to taste the vegetables of which it consisted, but, notwithstanding his desire for food, their rancid taste, and the heated condition of the lentils before they were submitted to the action of fire and water, completely blunted the keenness of his

hunger, and he spat the nauseous food out into the hearth. He seized the pitcher, and, ere his thirst was slaked, swallowed a few mouthfuls of water that teemed with animalcula;* yet, putrid as it was, the detestable draught partially revived him; but he felt that he could not hold out against this system of starvation, and determined, when next Ru came, to attempt, at all hazards, obtaining wherewith to satisfy nature.

But hour rolled on after hour, and his jailer came not. He already experienced the keenest pangs of hunger, frantically pacing his cell, or sitting upon his bed, mute and despairing, as he vainly listened to catch the sound of Ru's footsteps, or the chimes of a bell to warn him of the hour of his approach. But for the water in the pitcher, he must have succumbed; at length, *this* failed, and he threw himself down on the pallet, a prey to the intensest anguish, both mental and physical, yet, loathing to eat the noisome food of the Bastile. He would have eaten it, but could not.

After a lapse of some hours, the sound of approaching footsteps *did* reach his ear—but they seemed to proceed beyond his cell, and, at last became distinctly audible over-head.

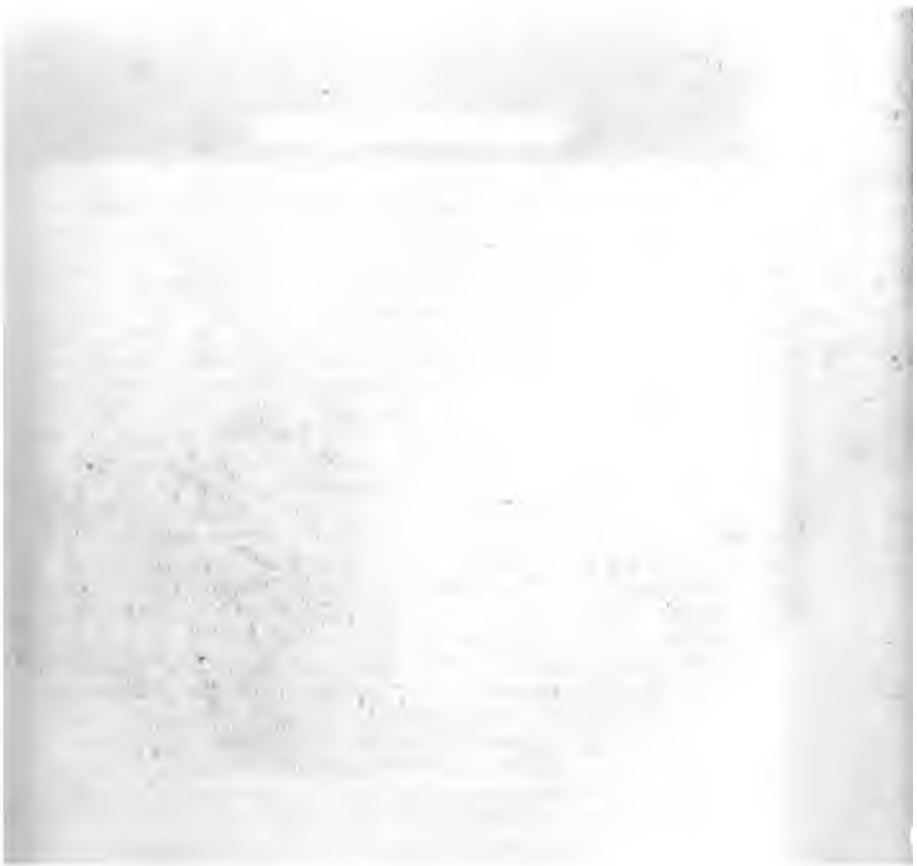
Was this another victim added to those already incarcerated within the dreary walls of the Bastile?

A quarter of an hour elapsed, which to the baron appeared protracted to twice that period, when his own cell-door was thrown open, and Ru entered, followed by a second personage, who remained stationary at the entrance, whilst the jailer removed the rejected food, and placed more, but of the same kind, in its stead, refilling the pitcher. He next threw on the hearth, a few logs of wood, and kindled a fire, during which operation, his back being turned to the door, the new-comer checked, by a significant glance, a gesture of the baron, who arose for the purpose of putting into effect his resolution of the morning; Ru stooped to blow the fire with his breath, for the wood, being damp, would not ignite; taking advantage of his position, Jacques, for 'twas he, threw a cake of chocolate upon the baron's bed, immediately placing his finger on his lips, to indicate secresy, assuming, as Ru turned round, a posture of perfect abstraction.

The worthy pair quitted the cell, immediately that Ru's mission was completed; the latter, without even looking at the baron; whilst Jacques, who, as he retreated, caught the baron's eye, conveyed to him a glance intelligential of succour at hand.

On their disappearance, the baron burst into tears: he was again alone!

* In the "*Memoires de Gourville*" is a detailed account of the sufferings he underwent in consequence of the insalubrity of the water. The well was in the second interior court, close to the Tower called *La Tour du Puits*, (the Tower of the Well,) and adjoined the kitchens; it was converted into a receptacle for the offal from the same, and harboured rats, and vermin of every description. Gourville asserts, that he saw, poured into this same well, the water which the then Governor's wife had used as a bath.



Deeper checked by a significant objective gesture of the Baron.

Recovering his self-possession, he speedily converted the nutritious cake into a liquid, by boiling it in the earthen pitcher, upon the cheerful fire which now blazed in the hearth—having, first, partially clarified the supply of water, that Ru had brought,—the beverage restored him, and he again turned, with disgust, from the diet which his jailer had left for his evening's repast.

The baron enjoyed another night's rest, and awoke in the morning, some length of time before Ru made his appearance: the latter, as on former occasions, examined the untouched food, supplied a fresh portion for the early meal, then, quitted the cell; but without uttering a syllable, or even making the least sign.

From this period, until that of his daughter's abduction—a lapse of thirteen days — the position of the prisoner in No. 2. La Bertaudière, visibly amended: a clean straw-bed replaced his dirty pallet—an easy chair augmented the catalogue of his moveables—his food, better in quality, and more carefully dressed, no longer smoked on unclean platters—the wine, too, improved, being now potable, though still somewhat acrid—a fire enlivened his cell during the day, a lamp at night—a few books, borrowed from the chaplain's library, served to relieve the heavy monotony of the tedious hours—even Ru, though ever taciturn—in conformity with the strict rules of the château,*—manifested more deference and civility to the prisoner who was known to be under the especial protection of the much-feared Lieutenant of Police: the baron, however, notwithstanding his experience of his jailer's obstinate silence, on several occasions essayed to extract a few words from him, but without success; for Ru, took no notice of his interrogator, save by pinching in his mouth until the lips became invisible, and at sundry periods, emptying the bottle containing the baron's dinner-wine, of the remainder of its contents. Once, and only once, a stranger came to the cell-door, but after glancing his eye around the dungeon,—whilst the subordinate arranged the prisoner's condiments—disappeared with him, without breaking silence: even his unknown friend seemed to have forgotten him.

But, in spite of the comparative comforts which he now enjoyed, the old nobleman's mind gradually fell a prey to the agonies of grief and suspense—his anxiety too, respecting his daughters, daily gathered strength—and in proportion as the term allowed him to appeal against D'Argenson's claim, drew towards its close, the days succeeded one another, more and more rapidly—his despondency increasing, as his hopes of liberation fell.

This was his position at the period of Julie's abduction.

* On the destruction of the Bastile, exact copies of many of the rules and regulations for the government of the interior, were found; a few exist, which may be seen in the Bibliothèque du Roi, at Paris. The following is a correct translation of the law enjoining secresy on the part of the jailer, as of the other functionaries, with regard to a prisoner.

"Unless by an express permission from his Majesty, or from his deputed officer, no prisoner shall be visited or spoken to, *under any pretence whatever*, on pain of imprisonment for life, to the functionary so offending."

CHAPTER IX.

A CHANGE FOR THE WORSE. ST. MARC AT FAULT. JACQUES'S MYSTERIOUS AGENCY.

The vehicle containing Jacques and the insensible Julie, rolled onwards, at a rapid pace, towards its sombre destination; and now, a current of cold air—engendered by the swift motion of the coach—came whistling through the open windows, and, fanning the maiden's pallid cheek, gradually restored her suspended faculties: a sudden shriek, succeeded by a gush of tears, were the first indices that she gave of consciousness, as she became indistinctly aware, of the nature of her companionship with the man, whose image still remained impressed upon her affrighted imagination.

First, she beheld him, standing in the apartment which they had just quitted—each lineament drawn in bold relief—tangibly distinct amidst the gloom—then, as the dull lights flashed and flickered across their path—the transitory gleam only deepening the succeeding darkness—she could perceive his dark eyes glaring into her face, and shrunk back, shuddering, rivetted to her seat—fascinated by his gaze, into powerlessness, like the victim of the fabled basilisk: still, onwards they dashed, with fearful rapidity, through the narrow, tortuous streets of the Cité;* louder and louder groaned the crazy vehicle, as, with painful efforts, it lifted its cumbrous frame over the rough pavement—faster and faster past her eyes, shot the twinkling flames from the solitary lamps, here and there, flitting in the gloom, like *ignes-fatui*—and more rapidly still wandered her thoughts, from the happy past to the horrid present, and from the horrid present, again to the happy past. Now did her imagination pourtray bright scenes of felicity, familiar to her in childhood—in girlhood: she beheld herself, caressed by her beloved sister—bounding with her over the green lawns, and through the shady alleys and walks of the home they had so recently left—there flowed the Erdre, smoothly gurgling over its gravelly bed, towards the romantic shell-house erected by

* The *Cité* includes the *isle St. Louis*, the *isle Nôtre Dame*, and the *ilôt du Passeur aux Vaches;* at the western extremity is built the *Pont Neuf;* and at the eastern, the celebrated *Pont de la Tournelle.*

their own labour—moored to the grassy bank, and swinging with the gentle current, lay the tiny boat which they were wont to paddle up or down the easy stream, or seated in which, they ensnared, with net or line, its finny inhabitants—here, in the bright sunshine, rippled the pool, partially covered by the spreading, graceful lotus, and frequented by a cackling brood of aquatic fowl, which, accustomed to feed from her hand, now awaited her approach—her garden too—emitting a thousand odours—appears, to her entranced imagination, more lovely than ever, as she recognizes and counts each flower which enlivens it—her father's form becomes distinct before her—his eyes glisten with paternal pleasure, as she surprises him in his customary morning ramble, and leaps forward to embrace him—she is nearly in his arms—the scene changes—she finds herself alone, on the terrace of the château—brightly shines the moon in the unclouded azure—sweetly the nightingale warbles her melancholy cadences to the night—softly steals, over her soul, a secret, an indefinable delight, as she feels her lover's arm encircle her waist—his hand clasps her own—transported with felicity, she returns the gentle pressure—his lips cling to her's in a fond, an impassioned embrace—when, suddenly—all again is darkness and confusion—noise and quiet succeed each other at rapid intervals—her heart still throbs under the influence of the enchanting vision—a chill runs through her veins—once more she beholds "that horrid man" glaring into her face, as the current of her thought is interrupted by a shock—the vehicle stops—they are at the Bastile!

Assisted by Jacques, she alighted, half fainting, from the coach: a stifled shriek escaped her lips, as the man partially enfolded her in his huge mantle, to protect her delicate frame from the piercing night-air, and from the unwholesome damp which fell, half-frozen, on her bare head and shoulders: yet, did she cling instinctively to him, as the harsh grating of the ponderous doors, revolving on their massive hinges, assailed her ears—preferring even his protection, to the custody of the hideous wretches whom they encountered on their passage through the outer courts—and more firmly still did she grasp his arm, as the huge, rusty bolts of the great gates shot back into their sockets, and the chains of the principal drawbridge were once more drawn down and confined within their iron locks—for now, did the helpless maiden feel, that the world had closed upon her—that she was separated from all in it she held most dear.

"Save me, Heaven!" she ejaculated, as, half walking, half borne along by Jacques, she approached the den into which they were now about to enter.

"By Heaven's aid, *I* will save you, maiden!" responded her companion, in a half whisper; and Julie felt two hot tears fall, in quick succession, on her cheek; she looked up, but the man's eyes were dry.

The officer on duty, who preceded them to the council-chamber, now threw open the thick doors of the apartment, exclaiming: "The

prisoner, Sieur Governor!" and withdrew, immediately upon the entry of Jacques and Julie.

As on a recent occasion, it was tenanted by St. Marc and Corbé, who, as the spy conducted his lovely charge—trembling with fear—to a seat, interchanged glances, betraying a purpose of vengeance, which, though yet slumbering in their thoughts, laid, serpent-like, feeding and fattening on its own venom.

"Give me the lamp, Corbé;" muttered the Governor, pointing to the table, and slowly rising from his chair, as his nephew hastened to obey his command; "let us examine our fair prisoner."

With an exclamation of terror, Julie covered her eyes with her hands, to shut out from her view, the hideous beings that approached her; then, starting up, fled from the spot where she had been sitting, to the opposite corner, whither Jacques followed, placing himself before her, and, by a motion of the hand, checking the nearer advance of St. Marc and his nephew.

"The maiden is alarmed, Sieur Governor," said he; "besides, she is ignorant of the customs of the Bastile! Fear not, girl;" continued he to Julie, raising her shrinking form, and gently uncovering her beautiful face; "'tis a ceremony which thou must undergo; although, it might have been delayed!" here he cast a withering glance upon the Governor, towards whom he now advanced, leading Julie by the hand.

Reassured by her conductor—in whom, her confidence, every moment, increased—she turned her swimming eyes, full upon the repulsive countenance of St. Marc, abiding his scrutiny, with less trepidation than disgust, as the latter, raising the lamp over his head, so as to cast its light upon her features, stood, with Corbé, apparently committing each to memory: this act fulfilled, however, she again hid her eyes, as though desirous to obliterate from her imagination, the fearful visages of her jailers. Such faces had haunted her couch, when her slumbers had been disturbed by phantom-dreams and night-mare—vainly, now, might she hope, for day-light to dispel their terrible realization.

On a sign from his uncle, Corbé drew a chair close up to the table—in which the Governor seated himself—and placed before him a portfolio, containing a number of fly-leaves, numbered and ruled; some, wholly filled up, others, yet blank; selecting one of the latter, St. Marc dipped his pen into a massive ink-stand, and staring intently at Julie, ejaculated:

"Thy name?"

The girl started, as his harsh voice grated on her ear, but gathering courage from Jacques's silent admonitions, answered, though tremblingly:

"Julie, Monsieur!"

"Julie! Julie what?" snarled the Governor, as he inscribed the name.

...turned her swimming eyes full upon the repulsive countenance of the Monk.

LONDON: T. C. NEWBY, 30, MORTIMER STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE. 1844

"De St. Auney," suddenly responded Jacques, frowning; "the letter of anticipation would have told you as much."

St. Marc's eyes, as he started at the name, flashed with suppressed anger; he returned the spy's scowl, though unable to conceal the emotion excited by his intelligence, and whispering to Corbé, the latter handed him a letter, still unsealed, which he deposited by his side, continuing:

"What age?"

"Seventeen, Monsieur!" sobbed Julie, making an effort to restrain the fast rising tears.

"Married?" quickly retorted the Governor, at the same time entering her age in the column.

"N—n—not yet, Monsieur!" hesitatingly responded the maiden, sinking on the stone-seat, by the door. But, the chord had been struck, upon which her youthful affections were strung—her overflowing heart re-echoed to the touch, and as her newly-formed, bright visions of the future, faded away, obscured by the dark clouds of the present—her bosom heaved, her sobs followed one another, quick and fast, growing every moment, more audible, until at length her sorrow forced itself a channel, and the bright tears gushed from her eyes, inundating, in streamlets, her blanched cheeks.

Unmindful of her distress, St. Marc, having appended, *spinster*, to the name Julie de St. Auney, continued his interrogatory.

"Thy profession?"

But Julie answered not the question, loud hysteric sobs choking her utterance.

"Thy calling, prisoner!" shouted St. Marc; "how dost thou earn thy bread?"

The maiden started from her seat; dashing the tears away, with her white hand, and proudly thowing back her head, she, with dignity, responded:

"I am a gentlewoman, Sieur Governor: and unused to such interrogations: I demand, at least, the courtesy due to my birth; unless I meet with this, I will answer no more questions!" and she again took her seat, awaiting, with an appearance of calmness, the effect of her determination.

Unprepared for this repulse, St. Marc—half incredulous—sat gazing at the fragile form of his fair prisoner, unable to articulate a word in reply: Corbé, too, started back, amazed, shrugged his shoulders, and turning round, stooped down, and commenced raking together the embers of the fire—apparently seeking therein, the elucidation of the mystery: he had seen, bold criminals, and bolder warriors, tremble before his uncle—but the boldest of the latter, thought he, never dared, thus, claim courtesy at his hands, nor thus refuse to answer the series of questions laid down in the regulations of the Bastile, as the interrogatory of prisoners. Jacques' eyes glistened with satisfaction, as Julie rebuked her brutal jailer; and

ere the latter recovered from his astonishment, or could frame a reply, exclaimed:

"Sieur Governor! thou art taking undue advantage of thy power: in the name of the prisoner, I claim, for her, the fulfilment, to the letter, of the document by thy side: 'tis yet unsealed—a proof of Monseigneur's attention to the duties of his office;" here a smile of irony curled his lip, as, bowing to St. Marc, he pointed to the letter of anticipation, which the former had neglected to inspect, but which, Jacques' quick eye immediately recognized, he himself, having been the bearer of the missive.

With a hideous scowl of defiance, St. Marc retorted:

"And what if I refuse? Knowest thou my power? dog, that thou art!"

Jacques smiled contemptuously, as he answered:

"Thou darest *not* refuse, Sieur Governor! and as for thy threats, they are idle; thou knowest I hold *that*, which would bear me harmless hence, though thy power were even greater than it is. Again, then, Sieur Governor, I demand, on my prisoner's behalf, the benefits of the letter of anticipation;" and again, Jacques bowed, haughtily, to St. Marc.

Trembling with passion, the Governor seized the letter, and tore it open, but, as he perused its contents, his countenance gradually fell, and his already puckered brow, gathered deeper wrinkles: nor did Corbé appear less moved, on receiving the document from his uncle's hand; having hastily cast his eye over it, he as hastily deposited it upon the table; then, looked at St. Marc; then, at Julie; then, at Jacques—and then, again at Julie—and from her at his uncle—and from him, again at Jacques; until, having completed his survey, for the third time his eyes rested upon St. Marc, and he ejaculated:

"Shall I go uncle?"

"At once, nephew;" responded the Governor: the next moment, Corbé, lighting a torch, which lay by the chimney-side, shot swiftly past Jacques and Julie, and disappeared from the council-chamber—his heavy steps, as he receded, echoing along the passages connecting it with the opposite wing of the fortress.

But if the conduct of the Lieutenant-governor excited surprise in the mind of Julie, her astonishment augmented, ten-fold, when she beheld the Governor, himself, detach the leaf whereon he had just now inscribed her responses, and hold it over the flame of the lamp, until it was consumed—he even gathered the white ash, into the hollow of his shrivelled hand, and cast it into the fire, as though fearful that any vestige of his late act should exist to bear witness against him—his eyes too, as he bent them towards the maiden—upon whom, but now, he had exercised one of the despotic attributes of his office—assumed an expression of humility and contrition, the sincerity of which, Jacques was not slow to appreciate—indeed, he had already framed a biting sarcasm—to which his lips longed to give utterance—but checked it on its passage, fearful of exasperating the wretch, into whose hands

he was about to confide the tender flower that he had, himself, transplanted to his unwholesome atmosphere.

Not a word escaped from either party, during the brief absence of Corbé; this lapse of time afforded Julie ample opportunity of scanning the dimensions—the construction—the furniture—in fact, the *minutiæ* of the apartment in which she stood; and of comparing it with the one she had that evening quitted, with those, which she had, hitherto, inhabited. Jacques knew the thoughts that were revolving in her mind, and inwardly invoked a malison upon *his* head, who had constituted him, the agent of her abduction—yet, as he pronounced the malediction, did his conscience acquit him of evil intent towards her—his heart beating with quickened pulses, as he framed a high resolve to deliver that maiden, scathless, from the toils now weaving around her.

Whilst the thoughts of each, severally pursued their object, the door of the council-chamber, slowly opened, and Corbé re-entered, bearing the still flaming torch, and followed by an elderly female, holding a small lamp, who curtesied low, first to the Governor, and then to Julie; the latter, on perceiving one of her own sex advance towards her, instinctively cast herself into her arms, thus silently, though eloquently, appealing to her for protection.

The matron, to whose guardianship Julie so confidingly committed herself, was a diminutive, dumpty personage, between forty and fifty years of age, individualized as a Christian, by the name of Bridget. Originally far, very far, below five feet, her stature had gradually effaced itself and disappeared, in her ever-increasing rotundity, until, at the period she is introduced, it was a difficult question to decide whether she could be most fairly measured by her height or by her breadth, either of which, however, would scarcely have equalled one third of her circumference. Her face, round as a Dutch cheese, might once have possessed charms—nay, this fact remained incontrovertibly established upon the existence of a second, equally indisputable, viz: Bridget's state of widowhood—which proved, that one victim had fallen a sacrifice to the potency of her small, black eyes —her sharp, turned-up nose—her button-mouth and lively complexion: her hair too, though now partially grey, was not without some pretensions to notice, being always very carefully smoothed down, in bands, over her forehead, and the ends tucked, with equal care, beneath a very white, close-fitting cap, with a very small plaited white border. Then she always wore a tucker and bib, both scrupulously clean—fastened behind by a triple row of tapes, and around the waist, by a band of red serge; red being a colour she most liked, because, as she often told Ru, in private, it *married* well with her complexion. Bridget's disposition wavered much, according to circumstances; sometimes she exhibited unequivocal symptoms of gaiety—but these would suddenly give place to paroxysms of turbulence, that rendered her a terror to the cooks and scullions of His Most Christian Majesty's Bastile, and gave rise to reports,

that she owed her present lot, entirely to the fatal exercise of the same upon her late husband, and as these reports were not confined to the individuals above mentioned, but were equally current in other quarters, there may have been some truth in them. Certain it is, that the small portion of good-nature she originally possessed, had, under the strict regimen of the château, in which she officiated as nurse, gradually oozed away, until scarcely a particle thereof remained, which particle she kept, moreover, carefully secluded within her own breast, having frequent occasion to confer upon her own person the benefits of the same. Some time had now elapsed, since a female prisoner of Julie's rank, had been confided to her care, and greedily did her eyes twinkle on beholding the few articles of jewellery that adorned the person of the fair maiden—it would be harsh to assert that Bridget covetted them, though 'tis only justice to add, that they very much struck her fancy.

When Julie rushed into her arms, Bridget made no movement whatever, so completely was the expression of her inward feelings controlled, by her terror of infringing the strict laws, by which she, in common with the other functionaries of the Bastile, were bound, with regard to prisoners. All she could do, was to look first at Julie, then at St. Marc, who, at length exclaimed—

"Bridget! conduct that young lady to No. 1 in the Bertaudière tower: see that it be rendered as comfortable as possible, and that she have every requisite, becoming her rank, as a gentlewoman; remember, however, that silence be thy motto!"

Waving his hand, he arose from his seat, to usher them to the door, and, ere Julie could offer a word in reply, she found herself in the passage, without the apartment, following her guide to the dungeon allotted to her use.

Having passed through the sundry *corps-de-gardes* of the interior, they arrived at the last one, situated within the great door commanding the great inner court: here they found a sentinel, with Ru, awaiting their approach: as he raised his torch, and Julie caught a glimpse of his features, she shrieked aloud; whereupon, he turned round to the sentry and winked, chuckling at the impression which his physiognomy appeared to have created; then, beckoning to Bridget, to follow with her charge, at once dashed across the court, and unlocked the doors of the tower.

What was Julie's horror, on crossing the threshhold of her prison! Unclean, and unventilated, the stench from within, caused her to shrink back with disgust, notwithstanding Ru's telegraphic intimation, to the effect that she should enter—that the den below, viz: the dungeon, was far more comfortless, and that the one they were then in, had not been long empty—in proof of which consoling fact, he exhibited the remains of a plate of lentils, left by the previous, over-fed occupant: but to all these, and many other broad hints, illustrative of the same theme, Julie could make no reply—her tears flowing rapidly, as she leant upon the shoulder of her jaileress, who

now led her to a large arm-chair, at the same time motioning Ru to hasten the completion of the arrangements necessary to improve the domestic comforts of No. 1, La Bertaudière.

Whilst Ru was absent, Dame Bridget, or, as she was styled, Sister Bridget, abandoning her charge to her grief, commenced operations upon the bed; and having satisfied herself that clean sheets, clean blankets, clean pillow-cases, and clean coverlets were requisite; and that the pillows were a trifle too hard, and the bed itself a trifle harder still, to form a pleasant couch for so delicate a visiter, cast the whole into a heap, near the door, and on Ru making his appearance, silently intimated the extent of her wishes; a portion of which implied a peremptory command, that he should make as much haste as possible, to comply with them. Ru appeared perfectly to comprehend Sister Bridget, for, shouldering the entire mass of bedding, he at once departed on his errand: nor did Sister Bridget prove herself ungrateful for this specimen of alacrity on his part, since she at once commenced raking a hole in the pile of ashes in the hearth—then placed at a convenient distance from each other, the two large stones which served as dog-irons, and lastly, deposited thereon—with mathematical precision—first, a large log of wood behind, then, a smaller log in front of it, and between both, and on the top of the latter, a smaller one still; when, having succeeded in discovering a few pieces of charred wood, she proceeded forthwith to kindle a fire, and, ere Ru's return, had succeeded—by converting her mouth into the uses of a temporary pair of bellows—in producing a small quantity of flame, with a large quantity of smoke, to which, however, Ru immediately gave free egress, by setting open both doors of the dungeon—fully persuaded that the smoke could escape, but not his prisoner, seeing that he had, ere he mounted, taken the precaution of locking the double doors of the tower.

Many and rapid were the signals that now passed between Sister Bridget and Ru, and mysterious was the secret which rendered them intelligible; three several times did he disappear and re-appear, and each time did he return, bearing some article calculated to increase the catalogue of moveables forming—in the aggregate—the *comforts* of the cell. Most actively too, did Sister Bridget ease him of each successive burden, so that by the time her Mercury acheived his third journey, she had contrived to render No. 1 in the Bertaudière, passibly inhabitable—by making up a clean, though coarse bed—to which, by an effort of feminine ingenuity—she appended a curtain, formed of a piece of serge of nondescript colour, that had served her, a few years, for the same purpose—then she covered the grimy table, with a tolerably white cloth—and drew it near the fire—and further, placed upon the same, after diving into a small pannier—the product of Ru's third voyage—the remains of a roast fowl, and some white bread—and a brown pitcher of water—and a diminutive bottle of wine—adding thereto, a few apples from some secret store known to Ru—all of which preparatives, duly completed, she, with great show of commis-

eration, invited Julie to the feast; Ru looking on with an expression of satisfaction, that could scarcely have been greater, had the condiments been destined to gratify his own watering palate.

During the whole time, however, that these arrangements were effecting,—that is, within a quarter of an hour—Julie sat, weeping and sobbing, careless, apparently, of the movements of her jailers; twice or thrice she removed her hand from her eyes, but on beholding the dungeon which enclosed her within its stony arms, again shut it out from her view, her tears flowing with two-fold rapidity. At length, Sister Bridget, having fulfilled the duties of her office, intimated that her presence must no longer enliven the prisoner's solitude: so violent, however, were the paroxysms of Julie's grief, that the matron's dumb-show failed to produce any effect, further than rendering the maiden still more incapable of answering thereto; Sister Bridget, therefore, perceiving the uselessness of her telegraphy, limited her sympathy to pointing severally to the bed, and to the fire, and to the food on the table, and making the prisoner a low curtesy, noiselessly withdrew, closely followed by Ru.

The noise of the heavy keys, turning within the rusty locks awoke Julie from her state of abstraction: she started up, and all at once felt the whole misery of her position: she was alone.

Clasping her hands, she raised her tearful eyes to Heaven, and sinking on her knees, ejaculated, with all the fervour of a heart that learns sorrow for the first time:—

"Father! thy will be done!"

Leaving the distressed maiden, alone with her sorrows, let us return to Jacques, who, on the disappearance of Sister Bridget with the fair prisoner, from the Council-chamber, exhibited the pass, which, on a former occasion, had insured his egress from the Bastile. Not a word escaped his lips, nor did either St. Marc or Corbé attempt to break silence. On a sign from his uncle, the latter personage again made for the door: Jacques bowed to the Governor, and following in the steps of Corbé, still bearing the torch, soon passed the outer portal; hence, he proceeded in the direction of the Rue St. Antoine, at the corner of which, stood two individuals, enveloped in cloaks, apparently awaiting his arrival; the shorter of the two advanced towards him, as he emerged from beneath the shadow of the great wall, and laying a hand upon his arm, exclaimed, in a low tone:

"Is it done?"

Doffing his hat, the spy answered, in the same voice:

"It is, holy father."

"There is thy reward;" responded the individual, placing, in his agent's hand, a well-filled purse, and immediately rejoining his companion.

As their forms vanished in the gloom, Jacques turned into the Rue St. Antoine, and disappeared in turn.

CHAPTER X.

A SEQUEL.

Compelled to associate with the fraternity of spies—the secret machinery of that gigantic system, engendered, brought forth, and matured by the fertile brain of D'Argenson, and of which he was the life spring—Jacques early conceived a method of turning his connection with them to account. His gigantic stature, his immense muscular power, his energy—controlled and directed by indomitable independence of spirit and determination—most prominent when most opposed to the overbearance of the Lieutenant of Police (who, though servilely obeyed, was hated as much as dreaded)—these qualities had at once established him in the consideration of the set of men, whom circumstance had made his companions: assured of his empire over them, he adopted from their number, some three or four individuals, assimilate in point of character with himself, and whom, repeated trials had proved worthy of his confidence, resolving them into a secret committee, which met periodically, under his auspices, for the purpose of rendering account to him, of the intelligence they had procured through their respective emissaries.

The system of espionage established by their superior, the Lieutenant of Police, was a vast cobweb, extending over the face of the entire kingdom, and of which the sensitive filaments were prolonged into its remotest corner—each delicate fibre attaching itself and tenaciously clinging, to the asperities of its interior polity, insinuating itself, even into the privacy of the unsuspecting citizens: in its centre, couched D'Argenson—like a loathsome spider—greedily alive to the slightest derangement of the susceptible fabric he himself had constructed—ready to pounce upon the unwary intruder, ere he could disengage himself from the toils, wherein he had become entangled.

But, although assured of obtaining, through the medium of his secret agents, the earliest intelligence of the actions, public and private, of the citizens of Paris, D'Argenson—from the nature and constitution of the system itself, based as it was upon deceit—lay more open than any other individual of the empire, to the tricks of the very spies he employed; these, for the credit, but more for the reward consequent to the discovery of plots, crimes, or misdemeanours, invented tales, and carried them out amongst themselves, for the express purpose of extorting money from the avaricious hand of

their employer: nor was Jacques's committee backward in practising upon individual credulity, especially upon that of D'Argenson, whensoever the opportunity presented itself: in the fears of the innocent, the terrors of the guilty, the egotism of the rich, its members found a mine of wealth, which they rendered common to all their confederates, in order that each should possess the same incentive to multiply the means of increasing its fecundity.

A superficial glance at this system, will suffice to show how easily a suspected person might avoid annoyance, or any criminal escape pursuit, provided he could command the silence, or purchase the assistance of a satellite of the police; or, how readily the affiliated members of Jacques's committee, could save or destroy any individual designated.

From one of these, whom D'Argenson, unsuspicious of the truth, had placed about the person of the baron, Jacques gained intelligence of the proceedings at Château la Gâcherie. From whatever motives, his sympathies were immediately enlisted in favour of the old nobleman, and he determined to serve him; nor, having once so determined, was he long before he rendered himself master of D'Argenson's secret designs against his intended victim's liberty. To prevent the baron's journey to Paris, Jacques endeavoured, through the medium of one of his special agents, to forewarn him of his danger; but the attempt, desperate in itself, was, moreover, risked under most unfavourable auspices, in consequence of the removal of the local commissary whom he had—secretly gained over to his interests—and of the substitution of another, devoted to those of the Lieutenant of Police, whose vigilance, Jacques's emissary found impracticable to elude, until the very eve of the baron's departure. Of his failure, Jacques was unaware, until, from the lips of Monsieur de Joncas, the third in authority under St. Marc, he ascertained the particulars of De St. Auney's arrest, on the evening after it had been effected.

Perfecting the astute system of police that he had established, Monsieur D'Argenson found it expedient to place spies, within the walls of the Bastile—not paid spies, truly—but he converted into his secret agents, such functionaries belonging to it, who, by their position, were most competent to render him — unsuspected — a faithful account of the proceedings within; and these obeyed his behests with the more alacrity, and showed themselves the more anxious to afford proofs of their zeal, that the advancement of their interests depended upon the satisfaction of their superior, whose displeasure could, without forewarning, convert them from jailers, into the most wretched of prisoners: thus did they endeavour, by whatever means, to secure his patronage.

To the powerful and timely interference of D'Argenson, De Joncas owed his present elevated position; without descending, however, to the offices of a spy, he fulfilled the duties of his station, and, at the same time, discharged those towards his patron; neither exciting the suspicions of St. Marc, nor awakening those of his co-func-

tionaries: only to Jacques, D'Argenson's confidential emissary, was he empowered to communicate such information as he possessed, being pledged, moreover, to answer such questions, relatively to the interior government of the fortress, as should be put to him by competent authority.* By virtue of a special order, emanating from the Lieutenant of Police, and countersigned by the King and by the Minister of State, Jacques was privileged to enter and to leave the Bastile, unmolested, as often as secret business called him thither, and on one of his official visits, De Joncas informed him of the manner in which St. Marc had disposed of the Baron de St. Auney.

Notwithstanding his willingness, De Joncas could not interfere to ameliorate the unfortunate nobleman's position, without partially, if not wholly compromising the system, of which he formed an unwilling agent; nor without betraying it to the underlings, to whom he was prohibited from even hinting its existence. On the other hand, although equally desirous to alleviate the baron's sufferings, Jacques, for similar reasons, durst not confide in Ru, who was, besides, a creature of the Governor's. In this dilemma, De Joncas decided, that Jacques should accompany him, in his round of inspection, and, one evening, on Ru reaching the door of No. 2 La Bertaudière, should follow him in, as his (De Joncas') deputy, the latter remaining on guard at the outer door.

The reader is acquainted with the result of his visit.

That night, Jacques communicated the intelligence to D'Argenson, who, on the following evening, accompanied by his spy, hastened to the Bastile, and having satisfied himself of the correctness of his emissary's statement and of the prisoner's melancholy condition, proceeded to the apartment of the Governor, and apostrophised him in the manner already related; Jacques, accompanying Ru and De Joncas, in their inspection of another tower of the Bastile.

Abruptly quitting the side of the King's Lieutenant, as they reached the first inner gate leading into the vestibule, on their return from the tower—Jacques, impelled by some cogent motive, bent his steps towards the Governor's apartment—not however, with his usually firm gait, but furtively, as though fearful of meeting D'Argenson, or the Governor, or his nephew; he listened cautiously, and anxiously, as he crossed the anti-room, now stopping short—now advancing—then stopping again, and then, again advancing, until, at length, his hand rested on the first massive iron-door: extending his palm over it, he examined the iron-plates, attentively, guided only by the touch, for he had no light—and now, as his finger rested on the centre row of nails with

* Monsieur De Joncas was the King's Lieutenant, and third in authority in the Bastile. His duties were as follows: viz. to inspect the prisons in each tower, at least once a week: to report the result of his visits, to the Governor: to superintend the fulfilment of the Governor's injunctions, with regard to the treatment of certain prisoners: he also commanded the garrison, and once a day, went the rounds of the Bastile, with a picquet of soldiers, or deputed an officer to perform this onerous duty.

which it was studded, pulled the door towards him, as noiselesly as its weight upon the solid hinges would allow: here again, he stopped, again listening with increased anxiety—and a second time commenced his scrutiny, but, this time, in the direction of the second door, opening into the council-chamber, (wherein were seated St. Marc and Corbé) and along the solid masonry, which, to the thickness of nine feet, formed the wall and the passage separating the two doors.

Running his finger carefully along the massive stone-work, taking as a point of departure, the centre-row of nails which he had first touched, he detected a small steel-spring—so small, that it scarcely protruded beyond the level of the wall itself: it obeyed the touch, flinging open a door, formed, without, of the component stones of the masonry, and within, of strong plates of iron, to which the former were cemented—and in so nice a manner, that even by the strongest torch-light, he could have perceived no evidence of its existence; the whole surface of the wall presenting, so unbroken, so solid an appearance.

Hesitating on the threshold of the cavity, as though half fearful that his curiosity should be discovered by the occupants of the adjoining apartment, Jacques stood for a moment, doubtful, painfully alive to the slightest sound: suddenly, his irresolution disappeared; he cautiously, though quickly, entered the aperture, standing up within, and extending his arms from side to side, as if to ascertain its height, which he discovered to be nearly six feet, and its breadth and depth, somewhat less.

And now, again, did he listen—and distinctly did he hear the conversation of the Governor and of his nephew, even though it was carried on in low whispers: uncontrollable too was the feeling, which gave rise to the remark that so suddenly brought their conference to a termination,—and almost too late, did he repent of his unwariness —but prompt was his decision, on hearing the Governor's ejaculation,—to remedy the error into which he had betrayed himself—he thought of his pass — of that potent document, which should cause the gates of the Bastile to fly open for his egress—he heard St. Marc and Corbé start to their feet, and hurry towards the door of the apartment—but quick was his retreat into the small passage, as he noiselessly closed the secret door after him; and ere the Governor or his Lieutenant could surprise him, he stalked in upon them, in the unexpected manner known to the Reader.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CAPUCHIN; THE RECOGNITION; THE PLOT.

"No! thou art no shaven-crown, no shrive-sinner, no Capuchin, or I should know thee! I must uncowl thee, myself! thou shalt not deceive *me, sang dieu!* 'tis a sound proverb, says—work, thyself, and thou shalt have good servants—I ought to have resolved upon this step, earlier—I am too confiding—too unsuspicious—yes! I ought to have done this before; I should have saved five louis—five bright, golden louis! Jacques! Jacques! thou shalt repay them, with interest—aye, and with big interest."

Here D'Argenson ceased pacing the apartment; as he ceased soliloquizing, his features assuming an expression indicative of his determination to retrieve his error, by commencing operations without further delay.

He occupied the chamber in which, on the preceding evening, he had given audience to Jacques: the oil-lamp shed the same dim light around—the fire glimmered as cheerlessly in the hearth—he himself, again took his seat in the same old oak-chair, and again commenced the perusal of his Book of Reports. After turning over some score or two of the closely-written pages, examining each as he proceeded, his bony hand rested upon one, which immediately fixed his attention, and he commenced reading the entry, half aloud, every now and then interrupting himself by ejaculatory comments:

"Fifteenth of November; a Capuchin seen prowling about in the neighbourhood of the Carmelites; hour, ten at night! Sixteenth; seen again; same place; same hour: *suspicious!* Aye! it was, suspicious; very; but I thought lightly of it. Seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth; again: *to be questioned when next seen!* Twentieth; Capuchin, rather tall; avoided interrogation: not known at the Carmelites! Ah! no report now, for five days! singular! hum! Twenty-sixth; Capuchin entered the Carmelites—short—not same! Ah! ah! ah!" chuckled D'Argenson—"myself—myself—ah! ah! ah! sharp fellows, these! Twenty-eighth; tall Capuchin; traced from Rue d'Enfer to precincts of Palais Royal; where, lost!—Hum! the next is Jacques's report—that brings me to yester-night—to-day, I have had none—to-night, I will be my own messenger!" here he closed

the book, and cast himself back in his chair, falling into a state of abstraction, from which he was suddenly aroused by the chimes of St. Méry's Church.

Nine!" "ejaculated he; "I have half an hour before me—I will prepare at once."

So saying, he arose, put away the ponderous Book of Reports, and unlocking one of the large chests that stood in the apartment, took out of it a series of garments of different kinds, all of which he cast aside; at last, he selected one consisting of a simple frock and cowl, of grey cloth, and having replaced the repudiated habiliments in the coffer from which he had extracted them, proceeded to envelop his meagre frame in the ample folds of the garb that he had determined to assume: this done, he locked the large closet in the wall, containing his books and papers, and was about to extinguish the lamp, when the noise of approaching footsteps echoed along the outer passage of the lonely house, every moment growing louder, until, at length, they stopped at the door of the apartment. For a moment, a dead silence reigned, succeeded by a loud and peremptory knock, and by a deadened sound, as of a hand, feeling for the latch.

"Who knocks?" exclaimed D'Argenson, throwing back the cowl from his face, with a gesture of impatience.

"A friend!" promptly responded a voice which the Lieutenant of Police sought to recognize: "open; I have business."

D'Argenson, angry and annoyed at being interrupted, hastily turned the key, and pulling back the door, made way for the new comer, muttering an oath as he entered: it was a Capuchin!

However unexpected the visit of a personage, to discover whose incognito he had suddenly felt so solicitous, the iron-nerves of the Lieutenant of Police quailed not as the apparition passed him; as a measure of security, and acting upon his first impulse, he immediately relocked the door, withdrawing the key—the stranger meanwhile deliberately and with great dignity of manner, seated himself in D'Argenson's arm-chair, and, disclosing his features, exclaimed, with a boisterous laugh:

"Ah! ah! ah! Dost thou not recognize me, Sieur D'Argenson?"

The latter started, ejaculating in a suppressed tone, expressive of great surprise:

"The Duke of Chartres! thus disguised!"

"Even so, Sieur Lieutenant;" responded the Duke, in turn eyeing his interrogator from head to foot—not less astonished to behold him encased in a garb similar to his own—"we are surely bent upon the same errand?"

"*Tonnerre dieu!* no, Highness!" retorted D'Argenson; "my errand was *to* the Carmelites; his Highness—or I much mistake—is *from* that neighbourhood?"

D'Orleans started, but did not avert his eyes from the inquiring gaze of the Lieutenant of Police, as he responded:

"In truth, thou art wrong for once; my errand is, or rather was

thither, also; but know, Sieur D'Argenson, that, unless to assist me in the object I seek to attain, *thou* canst not accompany me."

"May I learn that object, Highness:" inquired D'Argenson, inwardly gratified at the chance which had brought him in sudden conjunction with the Capuchin.

D'Orleans paused a moment—looking at his interrogator with a mixture of contempt at his apparent hypocrisy, and of indignation at his attempt to conceal it—then angrily answered, whilst a frown darkened his brow.

"My visit has the same object as thine, Sieur Lieutenant: we are *now* rivals, but thou must give place to me: nay! seek not to deceive me—I repeat, that we are rivals, but I am resolved not to be foiled by thee—"

"Highness!" interrupted D'Argenson—astounded at the Duke's confession—"I am ignorant of your meaning! If to discover—"

"Bah! bah!" ejaculated the impetuous Duke—"what meanest thou by thy *ifs*, and thy ignorance? Answer me: who resides in that secluded house adjoining the Grande Chartreuse?"

Perceiving that D'Orleans was not in a humour to brook contradiction, D'Argenson with an effort to suppress his rising anger, calmly replied:

"The two daughters of the Baron de St. Auney, Highness!"

"How long have they been in Paris?" continued D'Orleans.

"A fortnight;" briefly responded the Lieutenant of Police.

"Who accompanied them?"

"Their nurse, and an old male-domestic."

"No one else? Is not their mother, with them? or their father? Sieur D'Argenson."

"Their mother is dead, Highness—"

"And the Baron?" hurriedly inquired the Duke.

"Is in the Bastile, Highness;" responded D'Argenson, in a deep tone, coupled with an ill-concealed expression of gratified malignity.

"Good! good!" replied D'Orleans, rubbing his hands with ecstasy; "and now, may I know, Sieur Lieutenant, upon which of those maidens thy choice has fallen: of course, the choice was on thy side."

D'Argenson frowned at this ill-timed sarcasm, and bit his lip, but was not slow to perceive that the Duke laboured under some misapprehension with respect to him, which it became imperative to dispel.

"Your Highness has been misinformed," said he, gazing steadfastly at him; "I have never sought the favor of either of the demoiselles de St. Auney!"

"What?" ejaculated D'Orleans, suddenly starting to his feet—"wert thou not expected by one of them, on the night before last? aye! even to night?"

"*Ventre bleu!* No!" answered the Lieutenant of Police, in a tone so decisive, as to dispel all doubts from the mind of the Duke, who heard the avowal with the greatest astonishment, murmuring:

"I was then deceived—and yet I could swear that I heard one of those fair maidens pronounce thy name."

"May I now ask your Highness a few questions?" observed D'Argenson, much perplexed at the nature of the Duke's communication. "Did not your Highness repair either to the Carmelites, or to the Grande Chartreuse, on the fifteenth of this last month?"

D'Orleans slowly shook his head, at the same time opening his eyes, and raising his eye-brows with surprise.

"Nor on the sixteenth? at ten at night?" continued the Lieutenant of Police.

"No!" ejaculated D'Orleans, more astonished than before.

"Strange!" muttered D'Argenson. Here he paused awhile; suddenly, he resumed his interrogatory, his face becoming animated as though a truth had all at once flashed across his mind. "But on the twenty-eighth, Highness; were you not, on that day, a disguised visiter to the Rue d'Enfer?"

"I was," returned the Duke; "but how that circumstance came to thy knowledge, or how it interests thee, Sieur Lieutenant, I cannot comprehend."

D'Argenson smiled meaningly, as though pleased at the opportunity afforded him of displaying his secret information, and continued his examination, without comment upon the inquiry of D'Orleans:

"And did you not, Highness, return thence to the Palais Royal?"

"Thy spies are worthy their employer, Sieur Lieutenant," responded the Duke, haughtily; "since when have I been under such special guardianship? By St. Louis, it is a surveillance—this of thy police—that might be exercised to greater advantage, did it take cognizance of the actions of our worthy Lieutenant: I marvel much, if the disclosures would not tend to *elevate* him in the eyes of our good citizens of Paris."

The face of the Lieutenant of Police grew pallid, and his lips quivered; less perhaps from the effects of rage, than in consequence of his violent effort to conceal it; he smiled—a hideous smile it was, too—a smile wrung from him by mental torture, and replete with evil intent: bending his searching eyes upon the Duke, he bowed, derisively, and with a convulsive, half-smothered laugh, retorted:

"His Highness is facetious, this evening: he should remember, however, that it is a part of my duty, to make myself acquainted with the habits of such, as render themselves notorious, only for their infringement of our laws, for the preservation of public order—"

"If such be thy boast, most zealous Lieutenant," interrupted D'Orleans; "thou art doubtless, already in possession of the particulars of my adventure, last night but one?"

D'Argenson *looked* no—his countenance assuming an air of great inquisitiveness, as the Duke, re-seating himself, commenced detailing the episode of the ring—his encounter with St. Marcel—and his rescue by the friendly stranger—ending his recital—given with great volubility—by observing, sarcastically:

"Thanks to thy admirable regulations, Sieur Lieutenant, for ensuring the public safety; the heir to the Dukedom of Orleans might have fallen beneath the sword of a common cut-purse! Ugh! the very vulgarity of the death makes us shudder!"

The Lieutenant of Police listened to the Duke's story, with marked attention, and after he had terminated it, remained some minutes silent, engaged in connecting the several links thereof, endeavouring to discover a clue to the offender, as likewise, to the individual who, from the first, had excited his curiosity.

"May *I* now ask," said he, "which of these fair damsels attracts your Highness to that quarter; and how long it is since you first beheld her?"

"Our acquaintance," responded D'Orleans, "is but of a few days standing! Father Dubois, my worthy preceptor—he has a quick eye after beauty, has Father Dubois—met the two young girls, a few mornings since, taking an early walk in the gardens of the Palais D'Orleans; he watched them home: the same evening, he repaired to the house, unattended—and whilst reconnoitering the exterior, saw a capuchin approach: satisfied that he was unobserved, the gallant gave a signal, by throwing up a handful of gravel at the casement, which was quickly answered, by the opening of the door; it closed upon him. Dubois did not remain to watch him out, but returned to meet me at our customary night-tryst: the worthy fellow—he is invaluable in this respect—related his adventure to me, and I—"

"Yes! yes! I know the rest," interrupted D'Argenson; "your Highness played the Capuchin, in the hope of succeeding to the fortune of your prototype! *ventre-bleu!* I have *not* been deceived then—Jacques is more honest than I thought him!"

"Jacques?" remarked the Duke, interrogatingly; "Jacques? what description of man is he?" here he minutely pourtrayed the spy, adding, as he ended; "does he answer to this?"

"Exactly!" responded D'Argenson; "why?"

"Then," continued D'Orleans, "to him are we mutually indebted; thou, for thy knowledge of this Capuchin—I, for—but listen: yesterday morning, when on the point of quitting my hôtel, a man accosted me, with—'*a pleasant walk to your Highness!*'—What interest hast thou, cried I, in my pleasures abroad?'—'*I have some in thy adventures,*' retorted he, in a familiar tone; '*allow me to return your Highness' broken sword!*' Ah! ah! ah! and the fellow handed me back my own rapier—the very one that snapt asunder in my hand the night before! 'Art thou the thief that robbed me?' exclaimed I. '*I am the friend who saved thy life*'! responded he, quickly. 'Thy name?' was my response. '*Jacques*' said he. 'Then, Jacques, good morning; come to me, at the Sleeping-Cat, to night; I will reward thee. With this, my friend Jacques disappeared, whilst I continued my walk!" and the Duke indulged in a long, boisterous

laugh, against the infectious nature of which, the grave and morose Lieutenant could scarcely guard himself.

"Now," continued the Duke, "to the object of my visit. Wilt thou assist me in this little love affair? I came hither, suspicious of thee as a rival; I am now convinced of my error: the maiden that owns the ring must be mine; what sayest thou, Sieur Lieutenant?"

"It can be managed, Highness; but not to-night;" responded D'Argenson, after a short pause: "it must be done without noise! But thou hast a rival."

"Who is he!" asked the Duke, rising suddenly; "dost thou know him?"

"This Capuchin!" retorted the Lieutenant of Police; "this Capuchin is he—I knew he was no shrive-sinner—yet, Jacques' words—hum! there is some mystery still—or Jacques has deceived me; *ventre bleu!* and robbed me of five good, golden louis, into the bargain—"

"By the bye, of golden louis;" suddenly ejaculated D'Orleans; "a lucky thought—friend D'Argenson, my purse is empty—thou must replenish it—"

"How much?" interrupted D'Argenson, briefly.

"Four thousand livres, down; and six thousand more before this day week, friend D'Argenson;" replied the Duke, throwing off his disguise, and putting on his beaver, which he had kept concealed beneath—"thou must be quick, for I expect Dubois; I gave him a rendezvous here!"

D'Argenson, imitating his superior's example, cast aside the capuchin-garb, and deposited it in the chest; as he stooped to lock it, his visiter threw his own assumed dress upon the same receptacle, saying:

"When I next play the monk, I will reclaim the habit."

"The fraternity will be no gainer," retorted D'Argenson; "it is already, overstocked with sinners; than whom I know no greater, than our friend Guillaume Dubois."

"Ah! ah! ah! my worthy preceptor," responded the Duke; "but were it not for him I should die of dulness—he has always some fresh intrigue on foot—some new pleasure: what sayest thou, friend D'Argenson, to a merry night of it?"

"With all my heart, Highness," replied the Lieutenant of Police, with an obsequious smile: "and here are fifty louis on account of the sum you need—" continued he, counting the money into the Duke's hand; "to-morrow I will give you the remainder."

"The *whole* sum, *to-morrow*?" exclaimed D'Orleans—astonished at this unusual liberality on the part of the Lieutenant—"thanks, thanks; thy gold will assist my project to introduce the lovely demoiselle de St. Auney to the notice of our friends at court. I can, of course, depend upon thy co-operation, friend D'Argenson?"

continued he, depositing the money in a large silken purse, beautifully embroidered.

"To-morrow, your Highness shall learn the extent of my zeal in your service;" replied D'Argenson, thoughtfully—"hark! I hear some one approaching—

"'Tis Dubois," responded the Duke; "I know his step; 'tis like his speech—unsteady."

The Lieutenant of Police proceeded to unlock the door, throwing it open, to admit the new-comer, who, on entering, nodded familiarly to D'Argenson, saying, or rather stammering:

"A very rat-hole, is thy *sanctum-sanctorum*, friend René; and what a labyrinth of passage leads to it! what a stench, too, of must! the sooner we decamp hence the better; what sayest thou D'Orleans? ugh! what a thief's-den is this thou hast brought me to."

"'Tis fitting to its purpose, Guillaume," replied D'Argenson, looking, with an air of veneration, at the dingy walls—"and," added he, bending his gaze upon Dubois—"when the son of a certain Limousin apothecary is canonized, we will here erect his shrine: there's not a rogue in Paris but would visit it."

D'Orleans smiled at this sally, made at his preceptor's expense, nor appeared less to enjoy the retort.

"The greatest devotee at such a shrine," rejoined Dubois, with a sarcastic leer at the Lieutenant and at the Duke, "would be thyself, René D'Argenson—the second, D'Orleans—

"Thou forgettest," observed the latter, smiling "that I am thy disciple Dubois—and that posterity will lay all my vices to thy tutoring, however opinions may differ with respect to my virtues; so, the less is said on the score of villany, the better. By St. Louis, should our royal uncle command the greatest rogue in Paris, to be hanged to-morrow, I would not give a sol either for thy neck, or for that of our worthy Lieutenant of Police."

"What says your Highness to the object of our errand, hither?" remarked Dubois, in order to divert the conversation into another channel; "has our friend René consented to assist us to-night in this abduction?"

"'Tis not to be done, to night," replied D'Argenson, gloomily; "other agency than our's is necessary—but, I have a plan, here—here—" and he laid his palm upon his overcast brow,—his face assuming so peculiar an expression, that both D'Orleans and Dubois understood him to have some deeper game in view, still unknown to them: he remained a moment, silent, then suddenly forcing a smile, continued, as though he had all at once banished the previous subject from his mind—"I am ready to accompany your Highness on your nocturnal expedition."

Whilst D'Argenson prepared himself to depart, D'Orleans, in an under tone, communicated the result of their colloquy, to his preceptor, who appeared fully to enjoy the projected night's debauch.

Guillaume Dubois, was a small—a very small, lean man—with

sharp features—small dark eyes, inquisitive and restless—his complexion, sallow and unwholesome, rendering the saturnine expression of his countenance, marked and decided, whilst its peculiar stamp of cunning, added to it, a ferret-like cast, fully corresponding to the grovelling, wary spirit of the man; astute and penetrating—ever intriguing to promote his own interests, or, to mar those opposed to them—cringing and obsequious to his superiors—arrogant and despotic to his inferiors—vacillating in his policy to attain his ends, but pursuing them with undeviating perseverance—sanctified in appearance—unholy in reality—possessing a soul capable of conceiving the grandest ideas, but ungifted with the genius of accomplishing them by other than the most indirect means—violent in temper—selfish to the extreme—subtle and designing—cold and calculating—without love—without hate—a debauchee and a gambler—a scholar and a wit—oily in speech, with an affected stammer, assumed only to surprise the secrets of others—notorious for his profligacy—concentrating within himself every vice—such was Guillaume Dubois, originally the son of an humble apothecary of Brives-la-Gaillarde in the Limousin—next a poor student at the College of St. Michael, glad to serve the Principal in the mean capacity of servant, as a set off for his education—afterwards, a petty abbot, and tutor to a shopkeeper's son—then the protégé of the two greatest *roués* of the court of Louis Quatorze—now, at the age of forty-four, Preceptor to the son of that monarch's only brother—and finally—under the Regency, established by his advice and intrigue in favor of his pupil—Prime Minister of France, and a Cardinal of Rome!

"Well," said he, in answer to D'Orleans; "whither shall we go?"

"Oh!" answered the Duke; "we will place ourselves under the guardianship of friend D'Argenson—he knows best, where the finest wines can be drunk, in the most jovial company."

"The select suppers at the Palais Royal," responded the Lieutenant, with a slight inclination of the body, "can boast of both—"

"Bah!" interrupted D'Orleans, impatiently; "I am weary of the Canillacs, the Broglie, the Nocé, the Brancas, and even of D'Effiat and St. Fare—I want change—something less refined—what sayest thou, now, to a cabaret?"

"I am no longer a frequenter of cabarets, Highness;" observed D'Argenson—"but if you will honour my hôtel with your presence, we shall there find good cheer enough—as for the company, what better can we have than our own"

"The change is for the worse," again interrupted the Duke; "but *'tis* a change, and that is all I seek: lead the way, friend D'Argenson!"

The Lieutenant of Police, with a gloomy attempt at mirth, ushered his visiters into the dark passage, and extinguishing the lamp, followed them out: that night, in the midst of riot and drunkenness, the plot was matured, the first step towards the accomplishment of which was the abduction of the baron's daughter.

CHAPTER XII.

JULIE AND HER JAILERS. INNOCENCE IN DANGER.

Julie passed the earlier hours of her first night in the Bastile, alternately praying and weeping: her fire had smouldered away into embers—her light, expended its vitality—ere she even thought of repose: she then sought her rude couch, upon which she laid down, without casting off any portion of her dress, and, with a prayer upon her lips, sunk, exhausted with grief, into a deep slumber, from which she was suddenly awakened, by sister Bridget.

As the maiden arose—only confusedly aware of her position—the matron pointed to a long glimmer of light—the skeleton of a sunbeam, now, reluctantly forcing its entry, through the thickly-barred window of the cell—and to a wooden bowl, half-filled with water, which she had placed upon the table; then, having intimated, by expressive dumb-show, that the prisoner must hasten her toilet, rapidly withdrew, as though fearful of affording her the slightest opportunity of breaking silence.

Having performed her morning ablutions, and offered up, as was her daily custom, a fervent prayer to Heaven, beseeching its protection, Julie sat down upon the edge of her pallet, and, with tearful eyes, examined the interior of her prison. Indescribable was the horror with which she dwelt, successively, upon the dark, naked walls—the dirty stone-floor—the gloominess that surrounded her: closely did she watch the rapid gambols of the multitudes of airy atomies, now dancing and pursuing one another—revelling, joyously and free, in the midst of that small, *small* beam of sun which had called them into sudden life: how did she long to be that tiny fly, yonder—perched upon the sill of the grated window: scarcely durst she breathe, or stir, lest she should scare him from his occupation, absorbed in which he sat crossing and re-crossing his minute legs over and over his diminutive round head, and rainbow-coloured, gauzy wings—every now and then stopping to dip his small black trunk into the shining drops of damp, fast exhaling into vapour! oh! why doth that slender gleam of light withdraw itself! 'tis all remains of heaven and life, to animate the poor prisoner's solitude! 'tis gone! and with it, Julie's half-hour of obliviousness.

Oh, solitude! where are thy charms—so vaunted—for him who is

constrained to endure thy dark presence, unchanged—within a prison? To him, thy smiles are those of madness and of idiotcy—thy voice, is of the sepulchre—thy form, indefinite, ubiquitous! despair illumines thy glaring eye-balls—thy right hand graspeth the grave—thy left, draggeth thy victim to unholy burial—these are thy charms, oh, solitude! thy charms—so vaunted—to him, condemned to live with thee, for ever, without hope!

Various were Julie's reflections, as she sat, alone, anxiously awaiting the next appearance of her mute jailers, and vainly did she seek to fathom the motives which could have led to her incarceration; that her lost ring was, in some mysterious manner, connected with it, she felt certain; yet, the more she reverted to the consolatory words of the stranger—her abductor—the less was she able to comprehend his conduct. Her thoughts, however, did not bear, wholly, upon her own misfortunes—her father—her sister—her lover—each in turn, absorbed her attention, nor could she restrain her tears, as she contrasted her present position, with that of yesterday.

At length, sister Bridget again entered the cell, closely followed by Ru, bearing a couple of small baskets, and a lamp; handing one of the former to the matron, he carried the other to the chimney, when, emptying it of the stock of wood that it contained,—viz.: six small logs—he commenced kindling a fire; Bridget, meanwhile, busying herself by arranging, upon the table, the contents of the first basket, consisting of a diminutive white loaf, a tin-can of hot coffee and milk, already sweetened, two eggs, and a square morsel of butter, of which repast, she, by signs, now invited Julie to partake.

"Thank you, good woman;" sobbed the maiden; "you are very kind; but, I do not require any thing; indeed, indeed, I cannot eat in this horrid place."

Bridget made no reply, but drew the chair closer up to the table, and taking her fair prisoner by the hand, led her towards the seat; the latter, however, ere she reached it, cast herself upon her jaileress' shoulder, ejaculating, convulsively:

"Don't leave me alone, again, good dame: you cannot tell how wretched I have been: you *will* stay with me; will you not? see! here are three louis and five livres; 'tis all the money I have about me—but it shall be your's if you will only bear me company a little while—if you will only speak to me!"

Still, Bridget remained mute; but a rapid glance sufficing to satisfy her, that Ru was standing aloof, entirely absorbed in admiration of the architectural beauties and proportions of the cell, the matron received the proffered purse, and with extraordinary celerity, conveyed it into her pocket: she then motioned Ru to procure another seat, and during his absence, re-commenced her dumb-show, with a view—in which she at length succeeded—of inducing her prisoner to take a portion of the food placed before her.

"Why do you not speak to me, good dame?" asked Julie; "no

one will hear you; and now that man is gone, there is no one to tell of you: I will not betray you, indeed!"

Sister Bridget looked towards the door, and listened a moment, as though fearful that Ru had concealed himself there, between the inner and the outer one, for the purpose of detecting her in an infringement of the regulations of the prison; she then muttered, in a whisper:

"I must obtain leave: if you remain here, long, I will get it, and come, as often as I can, to bear you company:"

"Surely, dame," observed Julie, still weeping, "they do not intend to keep me, long, a prisoner—here—in this dreadful Bastile. I have not done any thing to merit such a punishment!"

Sister Bridget shook her head, mournfully turned up the whites of her eyes—at the same time uplifting, and imparting a tremulous motion to her be-mittened hands—and said, with a sigh so deep, that it seemed to proceed from the soles of her feet:

"Ah, my child! perhaps it is *because* you have done nothing that they have placed you here! You did not refuse to become a nun, did you?"

"No!" responded the maiden, surprised at the question: "why?"

"Nothing!" answered the dame, with an air of indifference; "only that the young lady whom I had, last, under my protection, was sent here, because she would'nt go into a convent: I know all about it, for she told me all her troubles, and before she died, gave me—"

"What!" ejaculated Julie, with a start of horror; "did she then die? *here*, too—in this chamber?"

"Yes!" replied the matron—rubbing her eyes till they became very red, and then letting her apron fall from before them, as if to impress the maiden with the belief that she had been weeping—"indeed she did, die—and in this very chamber—on that very bed too—I never have liked to come in here since—"

"How long," tremblingly inquired Julie; "is it since that shocking event happened?"

"Why, stay"—answered sister Bridget, pausing, and scratching her forehead with her finger, as if to coax back her erratic memory—'tis ten years ago—quite."

"And did you say that you had had no female prisoner, under your care, since that period?" asked Julie with a shudder.

"Oh, no! I did'nt mean that exactly"—remonstrated the dame; "I have had a very great number of *females*, since—but no *lady!* at least I judge by appearances; for I never got anything from them but what they were obliged to give me—

"*Obliged*, dame?"

"Yes!" retorted sister Bridget; "I mean what they *allowed* me for attending to their little comforts—extra firing now and then—a little delicacy or two at their meals—clean water and such like—one can't be hard-hearted to a prisoner!"

Julie covered her face with her hands, and wept bitterly: she per-

ceived that a sojourn in her place of confinement must subject her to similar treatment, and that she, too, must purchase the mercenary compassion of her jaileress: she was aroused by a remark made by the latter—intended, no doubt, to convey the notion of her stock of charity being yet unexhausted:

"Even these," continued she, pointing to the edibles upon the table; "I have furnished out of my own pocket—for the governor never means any thing, when he tells us to take care of a prisoner; he would rather we did not!"

Though this affirmation was, in the main, correct, in the present instance, sister Bridget purposely falsified St. Marc's intentions; he had defined the conduct she should observe towards Julie, too positively to admit of doubt or misconstruction; but lest she should lose any opportunity of securing her influence over her prisoner—which it was to her interest to consolidate at the governor's expense—she felt averse to allow *him* the credit of her kind treatment of the girl, for the very simple reason, that she preferred it should redound to her own: by pursuing this line of policy, she left open to herself, a field for two-fold extortion, to the prejudice, both of St. Marc and of the unfortunate prisoner.

"If what you say is true," remarked Julie, in answer to the dame's hint—"I feel myself more indebted than my means, at present allow me to acknowledge; but I will, as soon as I can, discharge my debt in full."

"Oh, you kind, good young lady," responded Bridget, with most laudable self-denial and disinterestedness—"do not say another word—I shall be amply repaid for the trifling services I can render you, by the satisfaction of doing a kindness to a fellow-creature in misfortune!"

If—whilst the charitable matron was delivering herself of this sentiment—a human eye could, by any effort of nature, have ensocketed itself in a corner of her capacious pocket, it would have dilated with astonishment — nay, actually watered with benevolence—on perceiving sister Bridget's fingers catechise, successively, with every appearance of affection, the divers pieces of money contained in Julie's purse—the returning of her handkerchief into her pocket, having afforded her an opportunity of allowing her hand to remain in the same receptacle.

Julie appeared anxious to renew the conversation; indeed, was on the point of re-commencing it by some fresh inquiry, but, holding up her finger, the matron suddenly exclaimed: "Hush! they are coming!" and all at once began bustling about in the chamber.

A few moments after, Monsieur de Joncas entered, followed by Ru, carrying another chair: the former bowed to Julie, as he advanced, saying:

"Pardon the interruption, Mademoiselle; you must be kind enough to accompany me to the Council-chamber: allow me to offer you my arm!"

A gleam of hope shot through the mind of the maiden, on hearing herself thus addressed; she bounded to the side of the Lieutenant, and placing her arm within his, quitted the cell, with him, leaving Ru and sister Bridget to their meditations.

The worthy pair watched their departure, with an appearance of considerable satisfaction, the outward manifestation of which, in Ru, was the more exhilarating, that it presented an example of perfect contrast to the tenor of his usual habits.

He began by rubbing together his large palms, with a rapidity which threatened them with speedy dislocation from their bony continuations—his next feat consisted in the performance of a variety of fillips, ingeniously adapted to a melody of restricted compass, with a *virace* movement — the poem—extemporaneous, consisting of the juxta-position of three or four musical syllables, "*ron-ton mi-ron-ton ton-tane*," repeated with a strong nasal twang, deranged in its harmony by the motion of the head, alternately, from shoulder to shoulder—almost simultaneously with this, he executed a succession of Terpsichorean flights—erratic and diversified, perfectly unique, and totally independent of any previous knowledge of the five positions necessary to perfection in the art, being derived solely from an intuitive taste for descriptive choregraphy. Terminating his facetious exhibition by assisting sister Bridget to turn upon her own axis, and by a forcible abduction of her person from the spot where she was standing into the chair that Julie had just vacated, he, by a corresponding movement, transferred his own body into the seat that he had but now brought—when, resting his elbows on his knees, his hands supporting his two cheeks, he leaned forwards, and staring into the matron's face, burst into a fit of laughter, quite indecorous, but in which sister Bridget joined, though with a reserve suitable to the dignity of her matronly years, and of her imposing bib and tucker.

It may be imagined—because he fulfilled the functions of a jailer, or more correctly speaking, of a key-bearer of the Bastile—that his spirits partook of the nature of his employment, and so far from being of a volatile character—with a constant tendency to fly off, upwards—preponderated, rather, in the opposite direction, thus, producing upon his mind, an effect, corresponding to that of his bunch of keys upon his body, namely: a decided convergence towards the very centre of gravity itself. Now it did not happen that Ru was born under a jaundiced planet; his temperament, essentially ardent, constantly warred against the restrictions, which confined it to silent manifestations of its evaporative nature, although the various ebullitions of the same, thrown off in random winks, cachinnatory distortions of his features, and other occasional recreative telegraphy, greatly contributed to relieve him of his pent-up jovialty, as also to afford transitory amusement to his colleagues, and the subordinates of the prison—these fleeting enlivenments, too, came the more welcome and refreshing to the few whose position privileged them to enjoy the effusions of Ru's

humorous genius, that he himself was an evanescent being, of meteoric nature—performing, at irregular periods, his transits across their gloomy atmosphere—but whose evagations left them some reminiscence to cherish—some sparks of light and life—evidence, at once, of cheerfulness, such as it was, passed away—and of cheerfulness to come. Such was Ru, by temperament—of his disposition, those who had known him longest knew the least—few cared to fall under his dislike or his displeasure, for his prejudices and passions were strong and decided—nor, when aroused, could any one restrain them: dark deeds were laid to his charge, and darker might be expected from him—at the present moment, however, as has been shown, his mirth held the ascendant. The exhibition that he made of it, did not surprise Sister Bridget, who, accustomed to his mode of venting his gratification upon any occasion that afforded him a temporary release from his duties, returned his fixed stare, and by way of commencing a colloquy, which she knew must necessarily be short, ejaculated:

"Well! what hast thou to say, now?"

Ru held out his hand, winked his left eye, drew down the opposite corner of his mouth, and answered:

"My share! I saw it, Bridget!"

"Saw what?" exclaimed the matron, with a vain effort to conceal her trepidation.

"Hand over the three louis," said Ru; "the livres thou mayest keep."

"Nay!" remonstrated Sister Bridget; "this is too bad; let me retain a fair half—"

"Come!" interrupted her companion; "no mincing: I will have it, or——"

"Here, here," quickly responded the dame, placing the purse into his hand—"take it all—every sol; another time I will be more careful, and accept presents only when thou art absent."

"Do!" continued Ru, pocketing the purse and its contents: having done which, he collected the articles of crockery into a basket, and with an abbreviated display of his agility, quitted the chamber, leaving Sister Bridget deeply immersed in the mysteries of bed-making

De Joncas conducted Julie, at once, to the apartment in which, on the previous evening, she underwent her examination, and having announced her arrival, immediately withdrew, leaving her exposed to the glances of his superiors.

The group, into the midst of which she was ushered, consisted of St. Marc, Corbé, and a third person, apparently from about twenty-five to thirty years of age, by whose presence, the former appeared awed into silence, having partly retreated into the angle, opposite the spot which the stranger occupied, as though fearful of obtruding themselves upon his notice.

His air was martial and imposing; his stature, tall; his person, well-proportioned, and moreover, set off to great advantage, by a rich military costume: retaining that distinguished air, characteristic

of the man of high birth and breeding, his face, although not strictly handsome, was expressive, but with a somewhat sullen, or under-look of the eyes, which, dark and inquisitive, travelled successively, over every part and into every corner of the chamber, until they rested full upon the trembling maiden.

On finding herself comparatively at liberty, she cast a furtive, anxious look around, scarcely able to repress a shriek of horror, on recognizing the hideous Governor, and his more hideous nephew. Turning from them with disgust, the stranger's fine countenance next met her eyes: he was leaning against the low mantel, his right arm resting upon the shelf, his right leg, carelessly crossed over his left, whilst his hand played, mechanically, with the hilt of a splendidly ornamented small-sword. Her first impulse was to appeal to him for protection; she stepped forwards, to cast herself at his feet; but, repelled by his unequivocal gaze of admiration, faltered in the attempt—the crimson blood mounting into her cheeks, in warm blushes—as, unable to account for the unpleasant emotion which excited them, she sunk upon the stone-seat by the door, and covering her face with her hands, burst into a flood of tears.

The trio exchanged looks of intelligence, which, on the part of St. Marc and Corbé, assumed a more decided character, as the principal personage stepped forwards, and addressed the weeping Julie:

"Thou art, here, amongst friends, my beauty;" said he, taking her hand; "but were we *not* friends, thy tears would avail thee nothing. Do I not behold Mademoiselle de St. Auney?"

"My name is Julie de St. Auney," tremblingly responded the latter, rising; at the same time withdrawing her tiny hand from the pressure of the stranger's; "but, oh, Monsieur!" continued she, sobbing; "if you are really and truly a friend, tell me, I beseech you, why I have been brought hither—why I have been dragged from my sister's arms—what you want with me?"

"Thou askest too many questions, maiden, for one answer to suffice; thou shalt in due time be satisfied; for the present, tell me; dost thou know aught of a ring, that was taken—"

"A ring," hurriedly interrupted Julie—her pale cheeks suddenly incarnadined with animation: "if you know where it is, restore it to me, I beg—for to the loss of it, I attribute my present misfortune."

"It was—eh—stolen?" remarked her interrogator, inquiringly.

"It *was*, Monsieur;" responded Julie; "basely stolen—by a pilfering Capuchin."

The stranger's features relaxed into a scarcely perceptible smile as he responded.

"Doubtless thou wouldst be able to recognise him?"

"Sister Jeanne would, Monsieur; for 'twas she—"

"Jeanne! Jeanne is thy sister then, fair one?"

"She is, Monsieur! But whither tend these questions?" continued Julie, with as great a show of determination as her nature could

muster; "if you know any thing of my ring, and can restore it, do so, I beseech, and let me go my way."

"We possess a clue to it," replied the stranger, evasively; "but, thou surely would'st not leave this place, without some tidings of the Baron de St. Auney."

"My father! my dear father! where—where is he?" ejaculated Julie, in a sudden burst of affection, the tears inundating her lovely countenance, and rendering it still more lovely; "oh! Monsieur! do not keep me in suspense—you know not how I long to see him? If you *have* any tidings of him, let me know the worst at once; for, much do we fear some calamity has befallen him;" and she sobbed and wept abundantly.

The principal personage looked at her, a moment or two, as though moved at her emotion; then, casting a sidelong glance at St. Marc and Corbé, who stood, stern and impassible as granite blocks hewn into human form, tapped his heel with the tip of his scabbard, and responded, with a deep sigh:

"Thou lovest thy father, then, very, very much, maiden? Is there no one else thou lovest—or whom thou could'st love as well?"

At this question, Julie's heart throbbed violently—each pulsation driving a swift tide of warm blood into her cheeks—her front—her snowy neck—with much difficulty she stammered out:

"No, Monsieur!"

But the negative was scarcely uttered, ere, with the image of her father, another's, as dear, suddenly presented itself to her imagination, reproaching her for falsifying the vows that she had made, to love him alone and for ever.

In vain she attempted to correct the error—her tongue, as though ashamed of the untruth into which her maiden modesty had betrayed it, refused to continue its office—her sobs interrupted the sentences she essayed to articulate—and she bent her eyes to the ground, covered with confusion—a confusion, heightened by her consciousness that it was observed, and that her looks belied the words her lips had falteringly pronounced.

With an intuitive perception of the workings of woman's heart, the stranger, divining the cause of Julie's trepidation, hastened to relieve her embarrassment, after enjoying it an instant, in a manner which escaped neither the Governor nor his nephew.

Advancing nearer, he again took her hand, and gazing into her lustrous eyes, still swimming in tears, said, in a softened voice:

"Charming maiden; dry those tears, if they flow for the uncertainty of thy father's fate: he is safe—and, for aught I know, in good health."

Here he cast a look of inquiry at St. Marc, who shrunk from his glance, as he directed his own upon his nephew; the latter, however, merely shrugged up his shoulders, and stared intently at the door.

But Julie no sooner heard the stranger's consolatory speech, than

placing her other hand upon his, and pressing it with gratitude, she, artlessly ejaculated:

"Oh, Monsieur! you are, indeed, a friend! tell me where he is—let me only embrace him—and I will love you for it, all my life!"

And here, she looked up into his face, with such confiding sincerity—and that look, was so replete with innocence—that he coloured with shame at the unchaste thoughts burning within his breast, and checked his lips, in the act of polluting her virgin brow with the impress of an unholy kiss.

He had not time to frame a reply, for De Joncas again appeared at the door, and as the stranger relaxed his grasp of the maiden's hand, Jacques entered: the next moment the Baron de St. Auney clasped his beauteous daughter to his breast.

"Father! dear, dear father!" were the only words that the affectionate Julie could articulate; whilst the Baron, equally overcome, sobbed like a child: to find his darling girl immured within the Bastile, was a circumstance so unexpected—the thought, too, how she came there—and what had brought her—with the sudden remembrance of his own lamentable position—contributed to engender, in his mind, forgetfulness of every emotion, save joy—of every body, save his daughter.

The principal personages looked on in silence; the only one who appeared at all affected by this ebullition of kindred affection, being Jacques—who, whilst the large tears swam in his black eyes, rendering them doubly lustrous, stood immobile as a statue—every feature in his face rigid as mrable: his very tears were stationary.

A few moments sufficed to recal the baron to consciousness: gently setting aside the lovely head of his daughter, leaning, graceful as a willow, upon his shoulder—he turned his eyes towards the individual, who, as on the entrance of Julie, had resumed his position, and now again, reclined against the mantel-shelf.

A glimpse sufficed: the baron stepped forwards, dropping upon one knee—his left arm still encircling the small waist of Julie—and extending his right hand, exclaimed:

"Pardon me, Highness! Pardon me! but—I—I saw only my daughter."

Julie stood amazed.

"Rise, Baron de St. Auney;" replied Philip D'Orleans, Duke of Chartres, who now spoke; "rise! We know that fatherly affection renders a man forgetful, at times. But it is pardonable—it is pardonable!"

"And I, too, crave your Highness' clemency," faltered Julie; now for the first time, remarking the jewel that glittered on the stranger's breast; "ignorance alone, of your high rank, has rendered this, necessary; but now—I—I pray your Highness, exercise it in my dear father's behalf, and I will ever bless you—and pray for you—!" here she sank on her knees, sobbing.

Philip D'Orleans advanced, and raised the beautiful maiden, but

more with an air of easy matter-of-course politeness, than as moved by her prayer. Retaining her hand, he observed:

"A boon asked by thee, fair demoiselle, shall have our due consideration. Speak! our influence shall not be wanting to urge thy request in the proper quarter."

"Oh, Highness!" ejaculated Julie; "if you have the power, do set us at liberty—"

"Pardon me, your Highness;" interrupted De St. Auney; "the boon which my daughter craves as a favour, I demand as a right; and, moreover, to be made acquainted also with the motives for which I have been unjustly incarcerated here."

St. Marc and Corbé simultaneously glanced at Julie, and then inter-changed looks, a hideous smile playing about the distorted mouth of the latter.

It was the panther, licking his chaps at sight of fresh prey.

Philip D'Orleans remained a moment, mute, then exclaimed, loosing Julie's hand, at the same time smiling ironically:

"The Bastile is an unfit place to assert a right of any nature, Baron de St. Auney—and least of all the right to liberty. The motive for thy arrest, I know not: perhaps our *worthy* Governor"—here he turned towards St. Marc, emphasizing the adjective—"is able to inform you. Dost know Sieur Governor?"

St. Marc made a sign to his nephew, who proceeded to extract from a closet or iron safe, imbedded in the wall, a massive ledger-looking book, which, with some difficulty, he conveyed to, and laid upon the table, before the Governor.

It was a folio of large dimensions, about six inches thick, bound in morocco leather, and carefully enclosed within a case of the same materials, confined by an iron-lock; the back and the corners of the folio itself, were also iron-bound, having clasps of the same metal, and a small brass lock, opening with a secret spring: on one side of the exterior of the folio, was inscribed in gold characters, of great magnitude, the word "BASTILE;" on the other side, were emblazoned the King's arms.*

* This was one of the official Registers of the Bastile, of which a few only were found on the taking of the château, the remainder having been partially destroyed. Each page was divided into eleven columns, indicating the name, titles, and residence of the prisoner—the dates of his entry, or of his liberation—the name of the Secretary of State who countersigned the *lettre-de-cachet*, or that of emancipation, &c., with the motives for the prisoner's detention—four columns, numbered 4, 5, 8 and 9, referring to the *secret* Registers, and the eleventh, set apart for observations: the secret Registers, corresponding to the official ones, contained a verbatim copy of the Governor's instructions relative to the treatment of a prisoner, generally couched in the most laconic terms: thus, in that, corresponding to the official Register for 1686, will be found the following entry.

"The Sieur de Montmorency. *The Cage.*"

The *official* entry is dated, "14th February; *secret motives:*" and as neither the period of his death nor of his liberation, appears—contrary to usual custom—it is

With jealous eye and careful hand, St. Marc unlocked the immense volume—a volume wherein were enregistered the secret crimes of France—and, running his finger over the index—and thence to the folio-page—paused as he came to the name of the baron, looking first at Philip d'Orleans, then at Corbé, and then, again, at the book—then at the baron and at his daughter—when he smiled, once more bending his malignant eyes upon the book, but without breaking silence.

"Well! Sieur Governor;" ejaculated D'Orleans, inquiringly, "hast thou discovered the motives for which the Baron de St. Auney is detained?"

St. Marc closed the book, with a loud smack, as the Duke made a step towards him for the purpose of overlooking, and whilst the tone of his voice was expressive of the greatest deference towards the Prince, said, with an ill-concealed smirk of satisfaction:

"Your Highness! the column is blank!"

"Blank!" reiterated the Duke; "what of that?—what does that signify?"

"All! your Highness!" retorted St. Marc; "every thing—the motives are secret!"

Handing back the gigantic register to Corbé, the latter, at once, returned it into its hiding-place, hugging the book, as he conveyed it thither, as though its execrable contents formed part and parcel of his own existence.

As the Governor's answer smote his ear, De St. Auney smiled bitterly; he felt how much he was in D'Argenson's power—how great the authority of his foe, who had been able, not only to incarcerate him, but to do so without adducing any motive for so unjust a proceeding.

"Thou seest, baron, it is not in our power—" and he laid his hand upon his breast—"to afford thee any satisfaction. The motive for thy arrest being a secret one, renders uncertain the duration of thy imprisonment; but we will, gladly, for the sake of yon damsel, engage our interest in thy behalf, to shorten the term, when next we approach the person of our royal uncle, the King."

"I humbly thank your Royal Highness for this mark of condescension—" replied the baron; "but if *I* must remain here, until your gracious interference has had time to bear its fruit, let not my child be detained—*she* is not, surely, guilty either of crime to the state, or of offending Monsieur D'Argenson."

The features of the Duke became suddenly overshadowed as De

inhabitable, that the unfortunate gentleman succumbed under tortures, at which humanity shudders.

This is one solitary case out of *two thousand*, within forty-six years; for, *Official Registers*, now extant, prove, that within that period, the above number of prisoners mysteriously disappeared from the Bastile, without any vestige remaining to attest their fate: that they neither died a natural death, nor were liberated, in due course, is incontestible, since an entry to that effect would have been made.

St. Auney mentioned the name of the Lieutenant of Police, nor did it escape the observation of the baron, that his physiognomy was troubled and confused, as though he had been surprised in a secret, which he had thought known only to certain parties.

He had guessed aright—the sole motive for his arrest, was the hatred D'Argenson bore him, and of which he could perceive the Duke was aware, as also the Governor and Corbé, for the three exchanged glances, which bespoke their inmost thoughts; had the baron looked towards the corner where Jacques had ensconced himself, he would have seen this individual, endeavouring by glances and signs—to signify that he was injuring his own cause by hinting his knowledge of the secret motives which had determined his arrest—but De St. Auney was now intent only upon ascertaining why his daughter had been brought to him, and therefore unaware of Jacques' kindly hints, his whole conversation being addressed to D'Orleans.

Before the Duke could frame a reply. Julie, looking into her father's face with ineffable sweetness, and casting her arms about his neck, said:

"But unless thou leavest too, dear father—*I* will not go. Thou shalt not remain here alone; and since Monseigneur promises to ask thy freedom of His Majesty, we shall not be detained long. Perhaps Monseigneur will also be able to discover the miscreant who stole my ring—the ring Leon gave me—dost recollect it, father?"

The Duke and Jacques exchanged glances, unnoticed, whilst the baron, returning the warm caresses of his daughter, awaited the reply of the Duke; these last words, suddenly, diverted his attention. He noticed the interrogatory movement made by De St. Auney, in reply to Julie's question, but as though desirous of evading the subject, fearful lest the discussion should lead to an explanation, that, for some latent motive he wished to postpone to a more fitting season, attracted the baron's notice by an almost imperceptible, although peremptory, motion, observing in a tone of commiseration:

"Our friend, yonder—" here the Duke's finger indicated the corner in which Jacques was standing—"made us acquainted with the circumstance of thy arrest, and we have convened hither Monseigneur d'Argenson, that we may, if possible, engage his influence in thy behalf. Perhaps it is in his power to set thee at liberty."

"It is, Highness—it is," ejaculated De St. Auney; "for to him do I owe my present misfortune;" he here detailed, succinctly, the causes which had engendered the feud between himself and D'Argenson—the end of his journey to the capital—and terminated by soliciting the Duke's protection of his interests before the Supreme Court of Judicature.

During this recital, Jacques became afflicted with a severe intermittent cough, which interrupted, at particular passages, the baron's discourse, who, however, continued his story to the close, notwithstanding Jacques' catarrhal hints.

St. Marc and Corbé listened with evident satisfaction to the expedient resorted to, by their superior, for the entanglement of the baron; their glowering eyes glistening with malignant admiration as he detailed the particulars of his arrest, and developed D'Argenson's policy in commanding it. The scheme was, to them, a creation as superior to aught their cunning could devise, as is a master-piece of painting to the tyro in the art, and they pondered over it, with much such feelings as an inferior artist contemplates the inspirations which a Raffaël or a Corregio, have pourtrayed and perpetuated upon their canvass.

The Duke paid extreme attention to the baron's tale, gazing, however, at times, with such ardour into Julie's face, that the poor girl durst scarce lift her eyes from the ground, towards which she kept them constantly bent. As soon as the baron stopped, he ejaculated:

"Hum! hum! We shall see, Baron—we shall see."

De St. Auney resumed, after a short pause:

"But it is not for myself, Highness, that I solicit; I can bear all this, nay more—

Jacques' catarrh here became particularly troublesome; the baron stopped a moment, and then continued:

"But why should the malignity of my enemy vent itself upon my poor child? wherefore was she brought hither? in this attire too; thus loosely clad?"

The face of Philip d'Orleans assumed a shade of deepest crimson, his entire physiognomy changing in its expression, and betraying great mental inquietude, as Julie, taking up her father's words, observed.

"Indeed, dear father, I had not time to throw even a shawl over me; that man"—here she indicated Jacques—"came in upon us last night, so suddenly through the window, we were too alarmed to do any thing. His Highness says he sent for *me*, to—"

Her recital was interrupted by approaching footsteps. This diversion in his favour, appeared to relieve the Duke, whose embarrassment had become too apparent to be longer, by any inward effort, concealed even from the baron; the interruption happened too, fortunately, for the baron himself, whose faith, in the uprightness of the Duke's intentions, began to be shaken, and who might—his suspicions being aroused—have betrayed himself into an indiscreet expression o his indignation at the collusion of his Highness, with the abductor of his child; the noise caused him to direct his eyes towards the door, as the footsteps neared it, but his countenance manifested the state of his feelings, retaining a mingled expression of pain, astonishment and distrust. St. Marc and Corbé listened—looked at each other, and slunk away, like frightened curs, to a greater distance from the Duke—Julie as though forewarned of some impending danger, clung closer to her father, leaning with one hand upon his arm, for support, and casting her other arm about his neck, her beautiful lips remaining severed, as still in the act of articulating: Jacques alone remained unmoved.

After a moment of suspense, the door of the Governor's apartmen was thrown open, and Monsieur de Joncas entered, and announce the arrival of the Lieutenant of Police.

As he withdrew, Monsieur D'Argenson made his appearance.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TWO ENEMIES IN PRESENCE. JACQUES AND HIS EMPLOYER. A DAUGHTER'S SACRIFICE.

Apparently, unconscious of the presence of the baron or of hi daughter, who, as he passed by shrunk from him closer towards he father, D'Argenson at once advanced to the upper end of the apartment and deferentially saluted Philip d'Orleans, without condescending t the same act of courtesy to either the Governor or his nephew.

The Duke returned the Lieutenant's salutation by a formal, distan bow; such a bow as a superior *inflicts* upon an inferior; a bow— rather the natural consequence of an habitual politeness, than in tended as a mark of personal consideration for the individual—bu there was besides, in this bow of the Duke's, a mixture of coldnes and haughtiness, which could not escape the alert observation o D'Argenson, who, however, seemed to notice neither *it*, nor the mani fest contempt which curled the Duke's lips, as he listened to th obligatory compliments of the day addressed him by his inferior.

As soon as the latter had terminated his brief harangue, Philip d'Orleans beckoned him nearer; they both withdrew into a retire nook of the chamber, remaining a few moments engrossed in a animated conversation, which, being carried on in whispers, was in audible to all, save Jacques, who, by his position, close to th door at the end of the hollow-wall, within which was the secre closet, was enabled to distinguish each word, distinctly; but, what ever the nature of the intelligence he thus gained, an observer woul not have suspected him to be a listener, for, although his whole at tention was concentrated to one focus, his features, his attitude— were models of immobility; as the Duke and D'Argenson, however again advanced towards the place they had but anon quitted, Jacque conveyed by a sign to the baron, intimation that he and his daughte formed the subject of their colloquy.

Both St. Marc and Corbé quailed beneath the glance that flashe from D'Argenson's eyes, as turning towards the baron, he encountere them, watching his movements; they stood restless and uneasy scarcely daring to move hand or foot, completely spell-bound by hi

presence. St. Marc feared a signal visitation upon himself, conscious of sundry recent self-appropriations of property, too glaring to be excused even on the plea of *legal plunder*, by the prosecution of a system of which, and peculation conjointly, he contrived to triple his stipulated salary. Ever fearful of detection, though never fearful of extorting—D'Argenson's presence was always a source of inquietude to his suspicious mind, and the present visit, when he stood confronted with one of his victims, appeared fraught with impending discoveries: he trembled as he prepared himself against the emergency.

The baron, on seeing D'Argenson approach towards him, felt his face flush with indignation; his lips quivered—his brow gathered deeper wrinkles—involuntarily his fingers clutched together convulsively—he stood erect, and with fixed stare, gazed at the Lieutenant of Police—braving his power even there, where that power was most to be dreaded—was least, under extraneous control. On his side, D'Argenson first made a slight inclination of the body, a mark of courtesy observed, but not returned by his victim—and whilst a smile of irony—of satiated malice—of vindictive cunning, played about his hideous mouth, he glanced alternately upon the baron and upon his fair daughter, alike unaffected, either by the stern gaze of the father, or by the horror-stricken start of the daughter, who in him beheld the evil genius of her family, and shrunk from him as the Spirit of Good from the profane approach of the Demon.

The two enemies remained, for the space of a few seconds, in silent contemplation of each other; the baron unwilling to speak, lest the consequences of a sudden burst of indignation should involve his child in his own ruin—D'Argenson, equally unwilling to commence a colloquy that he was conscious could not turn to his advantage: the Duke perceived the delicacy of the position, and assuming the privilege of a superior, broke silence, as much to bring matters to an issue, as to attain the object which had brought him to the Bastile.

"Baron de St. Auney," said he; "we have sought to influence the determination of our worthy Lieutenant of Police, as regards thy liberation; he is inclined to accede to our prayer—conditionally! Is it not so, Sieur Lieutenant?"

D'Argenson bowed obsequiously to the Duke, then turned towards the baron, awaiting his reply.

The latter, with an effort to quell his rising anger, drew his daughter closer to him, answering, firmly, and with a certain degree of haughtiness:

"Highness! I was brought hither unconditionally—and unconditionally I have a right to quit. His Majesty's Lieutenant of Police, has no warranty to detain me, having had none for my arrest, except such, as abuse of a dangerous prerogative of his office gave him over an unoffending man!"

The Lieutenant of Police smiled ironically, as the baron uttered these words, and retorted in a tone of studied coldness:

"Ugh! His Majesty's Lieutenant of Police, my lord baron, were unworthy the high office he holds, did he acquaint a state prisoner with the reasons of his detention in the Bastile! Not even to Majesty," here he inclined his body in token of respect, "do I owe account of my ministerial actions, and least, of all other men, to the Baron de St. Auney."

"Thou art accountable to me," exclaimed the baron in a loud tone, which his emotion rendered tremulous, despite an effort to maintain his firmness—"for *one* action of thy life—the abduction of my daughter. Answer me, without falsehood, if thou can'st, why thy vengeance has wreaked itself upon *her* innocent head? Would not one victim suffice?"

"With the abduction of the beautiful Julie de St. Auney," responded D'Argenson, unmoved at the baron's apostrophe, and casting a look of lustful admiration upon his daughter—"I had little to do. If thou requirest information on this point, I must refer thee to those who did it. *Sang dieu!* dost think me responsible for the misdeeds of my agents?"

Here Julie, trembling by the side of the baron, made an effort to quell the rising storm. Pale as a lily, she bent her swimming eyes upon her father's countenance, and in a voice, interrupted by hysteric sobs, exclaimed:

"Nay, father! dear father! I told thee that yonder man brought me hither;" and again she pointed to Jacques—"but I implore thee, father," she continued in a lower tone, "let us hearken to Monseigneur's proposal, and perhaps all may yet be well—" here she fondled the old man, the bright tears all the time, bedewing her cheeks, whilst he returned her caresses with two-fold warmth, regardless either of the presence of the Duke, or of the smile of malicious gratification which illumined for a moment the dark countenance of D'Argenson.

"Child! child!" responded the baron; "thou art guileless—unsuspicious. For thy sake, and for that of thy sister, will I submit to hearken to the proposals of my persecutor, but I will not waive my right to learn why *thou* wert dragged, at night too, to this den of crime and infamy? Speak, man," continued he, turning towards Jacques; "how durst thou intrude, like a midnight thief into my dwelling, and rob me of half my greatest treasure? Speak, I say!"

Philip d'Orleans bit his lip. D'Argenson frowned and ejaculated, casting a prohibitory look upon Jacques:—

"Speak? *Tonnerre dieu!* He dare *not!*"

"And why not? Monseigneur?" rejoined Jacques, undauntedly—"*I* have less cause of shame for the part I have played, than my employers for cutting out my work. I executed their orders—and to those who employed me must Monsieur le Baron apply for further information!" here he bowed respectfully to De St. Auney.

The baron perceived how matters stood; that he was in the very jaws of the wolf. He began to feel increase of mistrust with regard

to D'Orleans, but, whilst an inward voice whispered his children's names, determined to subscribe to any terms that would ensure his own and Julie's safe exit from the Bastile.

The Duke, relieved from his fear lest Jacques should discover the secret of Julie's abduction, thanked the spy for his evasive answer to De St. Auney's direct question, by a patronizing look which D'Argenson was not slow to comprehend, for he smiled approvingly, although inwardly mortified at his sharp rebuke. As the baron, too, appeared debating with himself, the plan he should adopt, Philip d'Orleans once more broke silence, saying:

"Come! We did not meet here to carry on a war of recrimination. Art thou disposed, Baron de St. Auney, to agree to the conditions of Monseigneur D'Argenson, in order to thy release?"

"First, let Monseigneur D'Argenson answer one question of mine; my reply, Highness, shall be quickly forth-coming!"

D'Argenson's eyebrows, by a convulsive interrogatory hitch upwards, denoted his desire to learn the nature of the baron's request: De St. Auney remarked the movement, and continued:

"My daughter, was not brought hither, for the sole purpose of seeing me; whatever the secret motive, however, which determined the violation of my domicile, and led to this outrage upon delicacy, I seek not at present to learn it: but this I demand of Monsieur D'Argenson? Will the nature of my reply to his proposals affect the release or the detention of my child?" the baron paused, D'Argenson exchanging glances with the Duke of Chartres, and with Jacques, alternatively. After a momentary silence, the Lieutenant of Police replied:

"As soon as thy daughter has testified to a few facts which we desire to elicit from her, with respect to the theft lately committed to her detriment, she shall be at liberty to depart: we seek not to detain her longer."

Although this was uttered in a deliberate tone, D'Argenson held his eyes averted, unable to withstand the steadfastness of the baron's gaze, which implied his doubt of the Lieutenant's sincerity; shaking his head, incredulously, he responded:

"Proceed then to thy interrogatory, Sieur D'Argenson! Thou can'st have nought to ask a daughter, that her father may not hear, nor my daughter aught to confess to strangers that should call up blushes for her father's presence: proceed at once; and Heaven be thy monitor, my child;" here he embraced Julie, and placing a hand upon her head, silently besought a blessing upon it.

D'Argenson paused a moment, glancing at the Duke, who stood perplexed by the baron's firmness, and then retorted:

"The noble Baron de St. Auney forgets, that within the walls of the Bastile, it is my privilege to *command*, not to obey. But to satisfy thy scruples, baron,"—here D'Argenson smiled ironically, emphasizing each word in the concluding sentence, as though it implied some latent design connected with the decision and influencing

it:—"I will on this occasion forego my right, and comply with a prisoner's request."

The Lieutenant's peculiar tone, coupled with his significant side-glance, convinced D'Orleans, who felt disinclined for the interrogatory of Julie before her father—that D'Argenson, with his usual discernment, had opportunely taken advantage of the baron's pertinacity, and by acceding to his demand, intended turning his mistrust to their own account, and to accomplish more fully, through the instrumentality of the baron, himself, the object they sought to attain.

D'Argenson's sudden readiness to accede to his wish, also threw De St. Auney off his guard, who gathering confidence in proportion as his doubts diminished, now half condemned the sentiment of distrust which had intruded itself upon his mind; involuntarily, the cloud passed away from his brow, and he stood awaiting D'Argenson's first question to Julie, with a greater degree of composure than either the Lieutenant of Police or the Duke evinced, as the former stepped forward to address the shrinking girl.

St. Marc and Corbé remained in their corner, exchanging glances and whispers, apparently uninterested spectators of the scene.

Jacques too was visibly moved; his thick brows were contracted together, until the orbs beneath were scarcely discernible—his hands clenched, as though by a violent effort, he restrained himself from committing some desperate act, and his lips closely compressed, by the force of some sudden, but invincible resolution; at length, D'Argenson began:

"Mademoiselle Julie de St. Auney, must overlook the sudden intrusion of our agent, but the nature of our duties often compels us to employ extraordinary means to accomplish the ends of justice with certitude; I alone am responsible for the mode in which her abduction was effected—"

"Then, thou wilt allow me to say," interrupted the baron: "that the privacy of my daughters has been violated in a most unworthy manner: it were well that the Lieutenant of Police were more under the control of government—"

D'Argenson took no notice of this interruption, but continued:

"We possess a clue to the ring that was stolen, but we request to know the name of the party from whose hands Mademoiselle received it?"

The innocent Julie looked at D'Argenson, with eyes brimful of bright tears, her face crimsoned with the warm blushes which maiden-shame had engendered. She had received the gift from her lover—from her affianced husband—but her feminine nature shrunk from the avowal; she turned her face away from her interrogator, and hiding it in her father's bosom, sobbed as she said to him:

"Thou knowest, dear father—it was Leon gave it me."

The baron understood the appeal, and casting a look of reproachful indignation at the Lieutenant of Police, replied:

"Thy question, Sieur Lieutenant is unbecoming a gentleman:

however—I am willing to believe it necessary for the furtherance of justice, and will take upon myself to answer for my child; that ring was the gift of her affianced husband, Count Leon de St. Leu!"

"St. Leu!" ejaculated Philip D'Orleans—"St. Leu? he who holds his Majesty's commission to serve in the corps of Musketeers?"

"The same—Highness—" rejoined the baron—"of which corps your Highness is chief: Leon often cites your Highness' name, with sentiments of gratitude."

"Enough! enough!" responded the Duke, in a most peremptory manner, his brow darkening with displeasure—"I am sorry—very sorry it is so. Lieutenant"—he continued, turning towards D'Argenson—"there is no necessity for continuing the interrogatory of this maiden: I shall see thee again to-morrow; to-morrow, at noon, come to my hôtel:"—and raising his plumed beaver, the Duke was on the point of quitting the apartment, without further notice of any one, when De St. Auney stepped forward and again addressed him:

"Pardon my boldness, Highness—but whatever motives of anger you may have against St. Leu—believe me, on my honour—they were never intentional on his part. I pray your Highness explain—"

"Peace, Sieur Baron," angrily retorted the Duke. "I have nought to explain; I am only sorry St. Leu was the giver of that ring—"

"Your Highness will, perhaps, condescend to stay a moment longer," remonstrated D'Argenson, perceiving that the Duke was on the point of betraying himself; "we have yet to propose terms to Monsieur le Baron."

"True!" observed the Duke—recalled to a sense of his indiscretion by a significant glance from D'Argenson,—"I had forgotten—" and muttering between his teeth—"St. Leu! impossible!" advanced a step or two nearer to the baron and his daughter.

"Baron de St. Auney," said D'Argenson, addressing him: "thy daughter is at liberty to depart, since his Highness considers further interrogation useless: thou, also, shalt be at liberty, to quit the château, if thou canst find, within twenty-four hours, security for thy re-appearance, here, on the day after the termination of the forthcoming suit, at the Supreme Court of Judicature."

The baron embraced his daughter, and said, whilst tears stood in his eyes:

"Go, my child; return to thy home, to thy sister—to thy lover: tell them thy father blesses them: they will never behold him more."

"Oh! father! say not so!" sobbed Julie. "Monseigneur will not—cannot keep thee here a prisoner for ever"—Corbé gave a hideous grin of incredulity—"only tell me what to do, and we will seek friends in Paris, who shall intercede for thee before his Majesty: your Highness will;" she continued, addressing the Duke; "you have promised—"

"And, for thy sake, lovely maiden—I will keep my word—"

"Nay, more,"—interrupted D'Argenson—"the baron shall leave the château this very day, if Mademoiselle De St. Auney will consent to remain an hostage for his return at the stipulated time: *that*, however," he continued, deferentially, "depends upon Monsieur le Baron's decision."

"Which is," shouted the latter, "that I will sooner end my days in the darkest dungeon of the Bastile, than child of mine should inhabit, even for the shortest period, its least comfortless chamber. Sieur Lieutenant, see that my daughter be conveyed hence, straightway: I will remain."

Jacques uttered a groan, and shrugged his shoulders; the baron looked round, and understood that this worthy individual disapproved of his decision: unable to comprehend the meaning of the friendly admonition, thus conveyed, he paused; D'Orleans, and the Lieutenant of Police, who had also heard the sound, sought in vain to ascertain whence it proceeded; they beheld St. Marc and Corbé whispering, and Jacques standing, apparently, motionless, his eyes fixed upon the Duke.

D'Argenson was about to hazard a reply to the baron's command, but was prevented by Julie, who, although unable to suppress, either the fast-falling tears, or the sobs that nearly choked her utterance, summoned sufficient firmness to leave her father's side, and advance close to the Duke, when, with a gesture, indicative of great decision of purpose, she exclaimed—

"Highness! will you not take a maiden's word, for her father's honour? I will be pledged for his return; will you not stand our friend, and give the required security?"

"Pardon me," ejaculated D'Argenson, drawing nearer the group, and leaning upon his cane, as he continued; "but there are reasons which render it imperative, upon me, to refuse his Highness's security; unless the baron can, through thy instrumentality, procure other, or will agree to thy remaining, in his stead—matters must take their course: I will not predict their issue!"

"Thou hast heard my reply to thy proposal;" observed the Baron De St. Auney.

"Then hear mine!" interrupted Julie in a sudden burst of affection. "I will not leave this spot, unless by force, until my father quit it with me, or consent to quit it, without me: I crave his Highness's word, that I be protected, during my stay; and confide in the honour of royalty."

D'Orleans was thunderstruck at the magnanimity of the youthful Julie; he gazed upon her features in silent admiration, inwardly despising himself, for entertaining the black design which had brought him to the Bastile, and betrayed him into acquiescence with a plan, the development of which disgusted him, and which, he felt, rendered him unworthy of breathing the same atmosphere, as his unsuspecting victim.

D'Argenson was *not* thunderstruck — he was unmoved — such

Julie seized the Dauphin and pressed it to her lips.

a result he had foreseen — to bring about such a result he had framed the project which D'Orleans had consented to second; he perceived the effect Julie's decision produced upon the Duke's mind, and, also, that if he did not check the generous repentance apparent in his countenance, he should lose an opportunity of securing his influence over him—yet, could he not suppress the feeling of veneration which overcame him—as he gazed upon the confiding girl—veneration which vice, intuitively—unconsciously—feels for virtue—veneration which virtue ever commands from vice; the feeling, however, was transitory—he smiled, conscious that the girl's unsuspicious sacrifice of herself, would neither save her father from his malignity, nor herself from his artifices.

So smiled Satan, when he first beheld Eve in the garden.

The baron, himself, was speechless; his emotion paralyzed his utterance; but, had it not been thus, his daughter's imperative glance would have informed him of the inutility of opposing, the sacrifice of her liberty; he could only look at D'Orleans, and at D'Argenson, and, had not the latter possessed a heart, impregnable to natural feeling, or, had the former possessed a soul above self, that look, and Julie's appeal to his honour, would have determined the abandonment of a design, diabolical in conception—damnable in execution.

Jacques appeared gratified at the turn matters had taken.

Whilst D'Orleans was hesitating between his better nature, and his baser self; whilst St. Marc and Corbé looked on, and chuckled over the prospect of the part they should play in the drama, of which the first scene only, was now being enacted; whilst Jacques, muttering a prayer, silently devoted himself to avenge any injury which might befal the baron, or his daughter; whilst the baron, thanked Heaven, for blessing him with such a child; and the child solicited the protection of the All-Powerful; D'Argenson stood calculating the chances most favourable towards the furtherance of his projects, and the probable results of his evil machinations—but, fearful, lest in a fit of temporary repentance, the Duke should suddenly refuse his co-operation therein—he ejaculated, in reply to Julie's appeal—

"I, myself, will answer for thy safety, beautiful Julie—and that, on the return of thy sire, thou shalt depart hence."

"Yes," chimed in D'Orleans; "we, ourselves, will see that thou art furnished with every thing befitting thy sex and rank, and my protection shall be accorded to thee, both during thy stay, and after thy liberation."

Although Julie mistrusted the sincerity of D'Argenson's promise, she entertained no suspicion of the Duke's honour; casting a look of discouragement, and of disgust, upon the former, she seized the hand of the latter with fervour, and, kneeling, pressed it to her lips, in token of gratitude, saying, falteringly, as she arose—

"Thanks, Highness, for this condescension; and now, father,"

she continued, turning towards the baron, "thou canst have no objection to go hence! Monseigneur has promised to assist thee in thy suit to his Majesty; go, we shall soon meet again—indeed, I do not mind remaining here at all;" but, despite her efforts at firmness, the tears would flow, betraying how greatly her inclination warred against her decision.

De St. Auney caught her to his heart in raptures, covering her fair front and beautiful lips, with warmest kisses of paternal love.

"My child, I *will* go," exclaimed he, the tears falling, hot and fast, as he spoke: "I will go: if it be only to return hither, to fetch thee, in triumph: I leave thee to the care of Providence, and to the watching eye of thy sainted mother; bless thee, my girl, bless thee—" his sobs interrupted him—but father and daughter stood, clasped in fond embrace.

D'Argenson exchanged a glance with St. Marc, who advanced to the table, before which he deliberately seated himself, whilst Corbé had, again, recourse to the closet, whence, he a second time, withdrew the same ponderous volume, and having placed it before his uncle, handed him a bundle of strips of parchment, one of which, the Governor commenced filling up.

Whilst he was thus engaged, Philip D'Orleans bowed to D'Argenson, and then to the baron, and, assuming the privilege of a superior, kissed the two cheeks of his beautiful daughter, regardless of her blushes and confusion; D'Argenson beckoned Corbé, who prepared to follow the Duke, and ensure his safe egress; the latter, as he left the apartment, again exclaiming—

"Good day, Sieur Lieutenant: remember—*to-morrow*—noon."

"Monsieur le Baron will please sign this paper," observed St. Marc, in a husky voice, at the same time placing the document in the position most convenient for the operation: "it is the writ of exeat."

The Baron advanced towards the table, and having examined the document, laid it down, observing—

"I cannot sign it."

"Why not, why not, *sang dieu!*" exclaimed D'Argenson, hurriedly; "it is necessary."

"Because," rejoined the baron, "the document is false: restore my—"

"Oh!" hastily ejaculated the Governor, catching D'Argenson's eye, "I understand—I had forgotten—truly—yes, yes!—certainly—the papers—"

Opening a large and very deep drawer, or rather, moveable chest, fitting into the table, and running upon small castors, he extracted therefrom, the valuables and the papers, which the baron had about him on entering the château: handing them to the legitimate possessor, not without sundry covetous glances, which were only checked by the silent hints of the Lieutenant of Police to the effect that nothing was to be withheld, he placed a pen in the baron's hand.

De St. Auney perceived, with evident satisfaction, that the valuables and papers were intact; he again perused the document.

It ran thus:

"EXEAT.*

"*Le Sieur Louis René, dit Baron de St. Auney, étant en liberté; je promets, conformèment aux ordres du Roi, de ne parler à qui que ce soit, d'aucune manière que ce puisse être, des prisonniers ni autre chose concernant le château de la Bastile, qui auraient pu parvenir à ma connaissance. Je reconnais de plus, que l' on m 'a rendu l' or, l' argent, les papiers, effets, et bijoux que j' ai apportés ou fait apporter au dit château pendant le tems de ma détention; en foi de quoi j' ai signé le present, pour servir et valoir à qui de raison.*

"*Fait au château de la Bastile, ce deuxieme jour du mois de Decembre, de l' année mil six cent quatre-vingt dix-neuf, à—*"

"I am not aware of the hour," objected De St. Auney, seeing this space was blank.

"Half-past eleven, all but two minutes," quickly replied Jacques, looking at an onion-shaped watch, which he held in his hand.

The Lieutenant and the Governor looked, angrily, at the interrupter; the baron bowed, and having added, "*onze heures vingt et une minutes de l' avant-midi,*" affixed his signature to the document.

Returning the pen to the Governor, the baron rejoined his daughter, placing a sum of gold in her hands, that, in the event of her being deprived of the comforts of life, she might, at least, possess the means of purchasing them.

St. Marc now affixed *his* signature underneath that of the baron, and D'Argenson countersigned the document, making, as he ended, a long and thick dash with the pen, close beneath the final letter of his hateful and hated name.

At this moment Corbé returned. The newly-signed parchment was folded, and placed within the leaves of the huge book, which was again closed, and deposited within its hiding-place.

* The following is a translation of the above form or writ of 'Exeat' when filled up "The Sieur Louis René, styled Baron de St. Auney, being at liberty: I promise, in accordance with the orders of the king, not to speak to any one, whomsoever, nor in any manner whatever, of the prisoners, nor of any other matter, concerning and connected with the château of the Bastile, which may have come to my knowledge. I acknowledge, moreover, that I have had returned to me, the gold, the silver, the papers, effects, and jewels which I brought with me, or caused to be brought to, the said château, during the period of my detention; in faith of which, I have signed the present document, to serve and to be enforced, to and by whomsoever has right.

"Given in the château of the Bastile, this second day of the month of December, of the year One-thousand six-hundred and ninety-nine, at twenty-eight minutes past eleven o'clock of the forenoon.

"(Signed) LOUIS RENÉ, BARON DE ST. AUNEY.
"(Witness) BENIGNE D'AUVERGNE DE ST. MARC,
"Governor, for his Majesty, of the Royal Château of the Bastile.
"(Countersigned) MARC RENÉ, VOYER D'ARGENSON,
"Lieutenant-Minister of Police."

But now all was done, the baron's heart failed him; he shudde at the thoughts of leaving his child behind him—he beheld the m nitude of the sacrifice she had voluntarily made, to secure l partial liberty, and with deep, but silent emotion, he again again folded her to his heart, again and again, invoking Heav benison upon her innocent head, whilst Julie, equally unable to u a syllable, and half-shrinking from the sacrifice which had rende her a prisoner in the Bastile, clung to her father, as though it w their last embrace.

D'Argenson spoke not; he stepped forward, making a sign to Marc, and handing a slip of paper to Jacques, was on the poin leaving the apartment absorbed in a colloquy with the Goverr when Corbé remarked:

"Does the Baron de St. Auney remain, Monseigneur?"

"He does not: it is I—" responded Julie, ere either D'Arg son, St. Marc, or even the baron had time to reply: and disengag herself from his embrace with a painful, though partially succes effort to overcome and to conceal her emotion, she said to father:

"Adieu—dear father: tarry not longer here, I pray thee, les regret that I may not accompany thee hence. Adieu! make ha to fetch me?" she continued playfully, smothering a sob—"I sister Jeanne, and—" here she whispered—"should'st thou see Le tell him—tell him—Julie hopes he will not—" she could say no mo for a flood of tears gushed from their beautiful fountain, deep s arresting the passage of her words.

The baron, checking his own emotion, would have replied, oth wise than by folding her more closely to his heart, but D'Argen unmoved, testily exclaimed:

"If the Baron de St. Auney is *quite* ready, we are both journey the same road—that is, as far as the gate of the château."

Unable from excess of grief, to say more to his daught the baron imprinted on her lips, a farewell kiss, and bow haughtily to D'Argenson, prepared to follow him out, Julie attend her father to the door, and suppressing all outward evidence of l mental anguish.

As the door closed upon the Governor, D'Argenson and the bar Jacques rushed forward, and saved Julie from sinking upon floor.

Corbé, an unmoved witness of this event, shuddered, as thou suddenly aware of the coldness of the morning—blew upon the t of his fingers, turned his back upon Jacques and Julie, and co menced raking together the embers in the hearth.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHOWS HOW ST. MARCEL WAS SET AT LARGE; AND WHAT BECAME OF HIM.

It will be remembered, that as a measure of policy, involving the safety of all parties, the worthy Commandant placed St. Marcel under arrest, immediately on the issue of the duel which so nearly proved fatal to St. Leu. His next step was to report both upon the sick-list, feeling disinclined to let the former roam prematurely at large, lest he should, in a fit of inebriety, babble of the affair to such of his brother-officers, who, not having witnessed the duel, had no interest to keep it secret. The term of his confinement, however, had now elapsed, which Schwillwein deemed unnecessary to protract, as St. Leu's wound no longer gave cause of apprehension; he therefore returned St. Marcel's sword, and on the evening of the eighth day after the fray, that he had so conspicuously figured in, dismissed him, with many injunctions to secrecy on the subject of St. Leu's absence.

On reaching the street, St. Marcel extended his arms and his jaws in a manner to induce a supposition of his having only just awoke from a long fit of drowsiness—in fact, he felt thus—for so unaccustomed was he to restraint, and so habituated to exercise, the eight days of his detention seemed lengthened to a like number of years; nor could he persuade himself, at first, that no important change had been effected in the city, whilst his trance lasted: the lamps, such as they were, twinkled with increased brightness—the few shops that still remained open, in the hope of decoying some late passer-by to a purchase, appeared more gaudy than when he last beheld them—even the venerable vendor of roast-chesnuts, who, under the auspices of the wine-shop keeper over the way, dispensed his farinaceous delicacies to the juvenile members of the community, looked seven years older—the very atmosphere itself seemed changed—it was so light, so buoyant, so clear—and the frosty air so exhilarating; he snuffed it again and again with the relish of a hungry pedestrian off a long journey, when inhaling the savoury odours arising from the laboratory of those mysterious operatives styled *restaurateurs*—whose art consists in multiplying the modes of flattering the gastronomic palate of their fellow-citizens. Feeling certain, however, that the Rue Traversière had not changed its locality, but still remained on terms of intimate neighbour-ship with the Rue St. Honoré—that, consequently, he should find the Palais Royal exactly where it stood seven days before, St. Marcel set off, at a rapid pace, in the latter direction, and after indulging in a pedestrian tour around it, some dozen times, all at once bethought himself that he had not supped.

Under ordinary circumstances, this discovery would have immediately led to one result, as obvious to every individual as it appeared to our hero; in his present position, however, it brought on a fit of temporary abstraction, for some minutes totally absorbing him in the contemplation of the means whereby might be attained, the consummation he so devoutly wished: 'tis true he endeavoured to establish

the fallacy of a second discovery, effected simultaneously with the first; but, unfortunately, the proofs were not palpable; with an invocation therefore—of a decidedly naughty tendency—upon his own ill-fortune, upon the better luck of the Commandant, and with a consignment of the dice to a remote region, suppositively, by speculative geographers, placed beneath the earth, he withdrew his hands from his pockets, at once philosophically resigning himself to the firm belief of his being unpossessed of a single solitary *sol.*

Facts are, proverbially, accused of a vice, hereditary to the living emblem of patience, nor could St. Marcel long controvert their evidence: the air had awakened his dormant appetite, imparting to it more than a modicum of its own keenness; but if a certain unmistakeable rumbling—followed by a corresponding sensation of abdominal vacuity—informed him, that besides an interest in his speedy decision, nature had a voice to influence it in her favour, the total absence of musical sound—on subjecting his purse and his pockets, respectively, to a vibratory and a manipulatory process—rendered him painfully sensible to the utter impracticability of satisfying the cravings of the former, by drafts upon the latter. Not that the supper itself, be it said, formed an object so difficult to attain—he knew friends, innumerable, at whose table his presence would be hailed with unrestrained glee—his old hostess, but especially her coquettish, black-eyed daughter, would joyfully spread a cloth and toss up an *omelette* to welcome his return—the Commandant, too, would not be backward in a display of hospitality—but neither of these courses suited his present happy frame of mind: he sought excitement—novelty in his pleasure—a supper with some fresh face—no every-day meal, surrounded and adorned with countenances as familiar to him as his own, seen through a reflecting medium—but some out-of-the-way, unexpected feast, at the expense of chance: it was his only alternative, which, being a man of the world, he at once embraced, forthwith starting off, in the direction of the Rue St. Jacques, bent upon a voyage of discovery in this, to him, unexplored region.

The *Quartier Latin* at this period held—indeed, still holds—a conspicuous position in the French metropolis, as the abode and favourite resort of the young aspirants to distinction in Theology, Medicine, or Jurisprudence; not, however, that this alone, constituted its claim to distinction—based upon the glory of ancient privileges—now abolished, truly, but associated with the early history of Paris—her regal rulers—her parliamentary despots—her not less arbitrary Provosts. Against the latter, the heads of the university had always carried on a systematic warfare, owing its origin to the constant tendency of the efforts and intrigues of the Provosts to curtail the privileges of the university, and to the determination of the university, to protect and enforce her acknowledged rights. Not one of the least dangerous of the former, was that of affording a sanctuary to criminals, who, once within the precincts of the colleges, could set the officers of justice at defiance, by placing themselves under the wing of the mother-bird. Nor did the matter end here: not satisfied with *protecting* runaways from judicial pursuit, the university, ruled by laws

of its own, often set aside the judgment impending over the culprit, and by procuring the sanction of the parliament, or of the political party holding the ascendency—a favour seldom refused, in those days of trouble, to so influential a body—released the offender, who again went forth, and in the very face of a just condemnation, returned with impunity to his old habits, until some unlucky chance placed him, irreclaimably, within the iron-grasp of the Provost-ship. A natural consequence of this contention between the Magisterial and Scholastic authorities, was the conversion of the hallowed precincts of the latter, into a sanctuary for felons and thieves, as also for adventurers, and men of broken fortunes, who, unable to obtain a livelihood, either from inability to do so honestly, or from an unconquerable predilection for deeds of daring, levied *indirect contributions* upon the wealthy citizens of the good city of Paris—sallying forth at night-fall upon depredatory excursions, and retiring with their booty, fearless of pursuit, within the holy-rood of St. Jacques.

Continually exposed to the society of this mass of lawless beings—ever meeting with some of them at the numerous *cabarets* in which the neighbourhood abounded—frequenting the same places of public amusement—jostling them in the day as they hastened, book in hand, to their respective classes—nay, sometimes even competing with one of them for a university degree—in a word, familiarized with their habits to an extent that rendered them unsuspicious of their baneful tendency—it will readily be inferred, that the disposition and manners of the students were deeply tinctured with the spirit of their associates, and that they, imperceptibly, became assimilate in character—not perhaps, to a criminal extent, but sufficiently equivocal to excite the close attention of the police.

One prominent feature in the habits of the former, was their joviality, than which, no charm was calculated to operate more potently upon the ardent temperament of St. Marcel: his own dissipated mode of life, congenial to that of the inhabitants of the Quartier Latin, prompted him now, for the first time, to seek their acquaintance, convinced that his rank, as an officer of the Musketeers, would ensure him a warm reception: for securing their goodwill, he depended upon his own resources. "Besides," thought he, "I may pick up a few stray crowns—there must be *some* saplings amongst them; so, courage, St. Marcel, my boy! courage!"

The vicinage towards which he now directed his footsteps, perfectly corresponded with the genius of its denizens. From the Fossés St. Victor, eastward, to the Rue de Seine and the Pré aux Clercs, westward — from the Seine to the north, to the extreme boundaries, south, of the Faubourg St. Germain—rose a heterogeneous mass of dark buildings thickly clinging together—by night, silent as the grave—by day, resounding with the buzz of a thousand voices, engaged in propounding the doctrines of the schools of Greece and Rome—in anathematizing the heresies of Luther and Calvin, or in promulgating new systems of philosophy and physics. Here stood the Sorbonne, with its magnificent portico and graceful cupola, whose sombre walls, scarcely a century and a half back, had

echoed the eloquence of a Theodore Beza and a Calvin, opposed to the specious dogmas of a Cardinal de Lorraine and a Cardinal de Guise; surrounding the parent edifice, at irregular distances, the schools and colleges figured next, with an outward appearance of modesty, quite becoming their infant state; whilst two or three, the *Collège St. Michel, De la Marche, Des Ecossais,* with the splendid cloistered *Ecole de Cluny,* already sent forth disciples, armed in Rhetoric and Philosophy, at all points, eager to maintain theses, even against the elder, black-capped, grave Doctors of the Sorbonne: then came long lines of narrow, unlighted, serpentine streets—steep and rugged—with a superfluity of gutter in the middle, and parsimonious foot-ways at the side—pursuing a course as tortuous as the career of some of their daily passengers—the houses, affectionately inclined, roof-wards, exchanging an embrace, or leaning against one another for support—overgrown, too, to six and seven stories above their foundations—with rows of windows, diversely ornamented, according to the taste, or to the domestic habits of the tenants of the apartments within—some with imaginary terraces built upon the sills—others boasting of aërial gardens, after the style of those of Babylon—*real* waterfalls, too, *à-la-mode* of no other city but Paris: many of the houses had large gates, opening into a square, populated by a few trees, shrubs, and exotics, in a state of rapid decline—others were defended by small portals, pervious only to such as had previously been subjected to a preliminary investigation, and special interrogation, by an ominous, gibbet-looking Cerberus, through a quadrangular grating, three inches square—intermingled with these, stood old dilapidated mansions, haunted by the departed spirits of their feudal lords—ancient churches, with sculptured portals and vaulted aisles, re-echoing the deep chaunt of the assistants at matins or at vespers—whilst in scandalous proximity to these temples, might be seen groups of wine-shops or *cabarets,* densely thronged by the joyous votaries of Venus and Bacchus—the line continued by rows of stalls and diminutive shops, plunged in Erebusian darkness—redolent of every odour, save of sweet ventilation—with here and there, at convenient corners, conical pyramids of rubbish from the neighbouring parchment-yards—monuments increased by the sedulous housewives of the vicinage by constant additions of vegetable refuse, bones, ashes, rags, carcasses of defunct individuals of the animal creation, species *felix et canis*—the whole crowned by an extensive superstructure of uncleanness of every description: and towards this delicious sojourn, St. Marcel was now hurrying.

He attained the *Pont aux Meuniers* (Millers' bridge) which still retained its ancient appellation, and was yet, at each extremity, covered with houses, but had scarcely proceeded over half its length, ere he stopped, suddenly struck with an irresistible desire to contemplate, for a moment, the scene that now presented itself.

The great city, buried in sleep, was silent—not an echo of life caught his ear, save, now and then, the distant, heavy tread of the solitary patrol—or the sentinel's *qui-vive,* challenging it on its passage—the moon, hardly at the full, and fast descending westward,

had overspread the clear sky with a broad sheet of grey light—partially eclipsing the lustre of the stars, merrily twinkling good-night to their brighter rival—to his left, the *Palais de Justice*, with its pointed towers, cast a long shadow upon the *Place* in front and upon the pillory standing in the midst—as if to conceal the evil spot from observation—far before him, the Pont-Neuf, with its long row of arches, abruptly divided his line of vision, branching off from the extensive frontage of the Louvre and the Thuileries, which, strongly illumined by the moon-beams, stood out in bold relief, majestic as their royal occupant—at his feet rolled the sluggish Seine, swollen by recent floods, and yellow with the washings from the clayey soil of its tributaries—moored to each bank, swung long tiers of barges, now deserted—but in the day, resounding with the noisy gossip of countless washerwomen, whose tongues, assiduous as their hands, emulated the clatter of the mill immediately beneath him—peeping over, he could discern a stream of dim light darting forth from one small square window in it—evidence of the miller's eagerness to profit by the flood—now, at each successive stroke, the broad flap of the ponderous water-wheel dashed away a fresh volume of spray and froth, which, refracted in the moon's light, formed a dense bow of mist—faster and faster sped the stream, and faster and faster sped the wheel—louder and louder grew the murmur of the waters—more and more merrily did they gurgle, and bubble, and froth, ere they sunk again in deep eddies—it was music to the ear of St. Marcel, who almost wished he were the miller, always to hear it—always to be near it—he could fancy it, with syren-voice, singing of happiness remote from scenes of dissipation—or mournfully chaunting the death-song of the suicide: he hears the heavy plunge rising loud above the roar of the waters—still they dash cheerly onwards, the white-crested surf dancing and glittering, multiform and transparent—now, it rises—it assumes a form, a female form—the long dark hair streams over the pallid features—the half-glazed eyes meet his—the hands are extended—they grasp with the desperate strength of death, the fast-revolving wheel—scarcely does the weight retard its gyrations—it uplifts the struggling victim—higher and higher it comes—now descends, now again immerses her beneath the dark mass of waters: all is over: no! once more she rises to the surface—but no longer clings to the treacherous plank—

"Help! Help!" shouted St. Marcel, aware of the dreadful reality, and throwing off his hat, cloak, and sword, plunged into the stream.

On rising to the surface, he in vain sought the object that had excited his humanity: his eyes were dizzy, and his ears deafened, whilst the sudden immersion had almost deprived him of the power of respiration; although embarrassed by his clothing, more especially by his large boots, which, filled with water, weighed him heavily downwards, he manfully prosecuted his search—now breasting the current, now allowing himself to be borne along by it—now traversing it in the direction of the shore; his cry for help had been unheard, for he could perceive no evidence of its being answered—once, only, he fancied that a broad flash of light gleamed upon him, but it flitted

past and vanished, as suddenly as it had appeared; he despaired of saving the wretched suicide, and made for the shore, when all at once the same pallid form again rose to the surface, and so close to him, his face almost touched it—for a moment the moon played upon the livid features—and strange to add, St. Marcel fancied he recognized them as familiar to him in childhood—to grasp the body as it rolled over, was the act of a second—with renewed courage, though with decreasing strength, he fought his way, and at length, benumbed with cold, attained one of the washing-barges that lined the banks of the river, near the Pont au Change: by great exertion he succeeded in clambering into it, dragging the body after him; here nature could no more, and he sunk, exhausted, by the side of her whom he had rescued from a watery grave.

Our hero retained sufficient consciousness to be aware of the necessity of renewing his efforts to procure assistance; he therefore rose, and lifting his charge attempted to leave the boat—but his limbs refused to perform their office; thus compelled to forego his intentions, he again deposited her by his side, and began considering what course he should pursue. His meditations were abbreviated by a bright glare of light—the same that so shortly since had dazzled him—this time it flitted in various directions, until at length it rested full upon his face and upon the pale countenance beside him.

"Halloo!" ejaculated a husky voice, belonging to an invisible owner, but apparently proceeding from a dark lantern, elevated some five feet in the air.

St. Marcel was unable to answer the challenge, which, after a momentary pause, again became audible.

"Halloo, I say!" cried the proprietor of the lantern, extending the benefits thereof to the citizens on the opposite side of the Seine, and directing his steps towards the spot where St. Marcel was seated: "where are you?"

"Here!" faintly responded he; "she is dead I fear: quick! let us see!"

"If she is *dead*," replied the new-comer, progressing cautiously "I need not hurry: if I'm in time to save *thee*, I shall still be in time enough!"

"Nay!" retorted St. Marcel; "thou mayest yet be in time to save her—assist me in bearing her hence—I cannot do it alone."

The individual was now close to our hero, upon whom he again directed the light, rapidly examining both him and the lifeless form over which he bent: with remarkable alacrity he then extracted from his vest, a flat bottle of rather large capacity, and uncorking it tendered it to St. Marcel, saying:

"Take a good pull—it will keep thy teeth from chattering—nay—don't hesitate."

Our hero, in obedience to the stranger's direction, subjected the flask to a severe experimental process of suction, during which, its owner slipped his arms from two broad belts by which a large basket was confined to his shoulders, and raising the female, continued:

"Throw thy cloak over her—'tis in my basket, with thy hat and

sword—I suppose they are thine; I found them on the bridge. There! now take my lantern—clap my basket on thy back, and follow me."

With a nimbleness that surprised St. Marcel, as it not only formed an extraordinary contrast with his former deliberation, but appeared in no wise affected by his burden, the man crossed the boats with a sure foot, and gaining the bank, proceeded swiftly over the bridge whence our hero had precipitated himself, continuing his onward course, past the Palais de Justice, over the Pont St. Michel, into the Rue de la Harpe, situated in the very neighbourhood towards which St. Marcel journeyed, when the event occurred that brought him into such unexpected companionship.

The streets through which they passed, were deserted, a circumstance favorable to the rapid locomotion of our hero's guide, who ran, rather than walked—his follower (in whom the brandy had infused new life) keeping close in the rear. At length, within ten minutes from the time they left the boat, they reached a large dingy house, on the left hand side of the street in question; St. Marcel, by the light of the lantern, rapidly examined the exterior, and beheld, painted over the windows of the basement story: "*au No.* 53, *Michaulx, Tonnellier.*" In accordance with the instructions of the stranger, he raised the heavy iron hammer suspended at the door, and gave two distinct knocks, then a third, the latter being promptly answered by the drawing aside of a small square sliding-panel, behind the grating of which appeared an eye rolling at our visiters, in a state of single beatitude.

"*Heus! ecquis est?*"* demanded the proprietor of the solitary visual orb.

"*Lutetia!*"† briefly responded St. Marcel's companion, bringing himself within the focus of observation by stepping before our hero.

The magic word was scarcely uttered, than the cyclopian warden closed the jealous parallellogram, and opened a small thick door to which it formed the embellishment: the stranger entered first, closely followed by St. Marcel.

"Polyphemus," said the former, addressing the mysterious guardian, "quick! to the hall! send us female help;" then turning to our hero, continued: "follow me, beau cavalier; fear nothing."

Whether owing to the quantity he had imbibed, or to the quality of the liquor, St. Marcel's strength had gradually returned; still he shivered from the effects of his sudden submersion, and therefore, appreciated the comfort of the large fire that blazed in a recess of the spacious vault into which, after traversing several narrow passages and descending a flight of stone stairs, the individual with the cognomen of Polyphemus ushered him and his eccentric companion.

The latter, on the disappearance of the cyclops, commenced operations upon the body of the female, for the purpose of restoring animation: in these he was assisted by St. Marcel, and being shortly joined by the handmaidens, their united efforts succeeded in produc-

* Ho! Who is it?

† The ancient name of Paris, derived from *lutum*, clay, with which the neighbourhood abounds.

ing symptoms of life, upon the appearance of which, the nymphs intimated to their male associates, that their further assistance could be dispensed with.

"Galatea," observed St. Marcel's guide, addressing the most matronly-looking of the females, "let us know how the young woman goes on: and thou," continued he to his companion, "follow me."

So saying, he struck the iron-hook of a long stick which he held, into the collar of St. Marcel's cloak, and swinging it over his shoulder, with the dexterity of a proficient in his craft, quitted the vault, followed by his newly-made acquaintance, bearing his basket and his lantern. After progressing through divers long passages, they halted at a large door; pushing it open, the friend of Polyphemus descended a second flight of steps leading into a second series of past sages, through which the cold wind whistled with considerable force.

"I shall introduce thee at once to the Emperor," at length said St. Marcel's guide, continuing his way; "thou shalt then be at liberty to remain with us or to depart."

"If it be a matter of no particular moment to the *Emperor*," retorted St. Marcel, "and thy companions have good cheer to offer, I shall claim their hospitality till to-morrow."

"Thou art cold," observed his conductor, remarking the melody produced by the frequent collision of our hero's teeth, at the same moment pushing open a small door in the subterraneous passage.

"I am," replied St. Marcel; "my clothes are wet—and the draughts in this *royal residence* are any thing but revivifying."

"Dost thou know this place, then?" asked his *cicerone*, surprised at St. Marcel's allusion and hesitating to enter the aperture.

"Not I, indeed," replied our hero; "I am neither a mole nor a rat to burrow beneath the earth with my kind; lead on, friend; thou hast nought to fear from me; and I am too cold, too hungry and too wet to hesitate whether I shall serve Louis Quatorze or the Emperor of his subterranean dominions."

His companion made no reply, but allowing the door to swing to of its own accord, behind them, led the way across a spacious vault, from the opposite side of which proceeded a broad glare of light, through a large aperture in the masonry; at this moment a peal of boisterous laughter burst upon them, intermingled with the clash of glasses and the murmur of numerous voices.

St. Marcel followed his guide through the opening in the wall, and found himself in the midst of a motley company, carousing in groups dispersed here and there in a vault of extensive dimensions, of a style of architecture that at once riveted his attention.

CHAPTER XV.

SHOWS HOW ST. MARCEL WAS INTRODUCED TO THE EMPEROR JULIAN, AND HOW HE WAS ENTERTAINED BY THAT MONARCH.

"Lutetia!" exclaimed St. Marcel's friend, upon their entry, thus commencing a communication to the assembled company, in a dialect

unknown to him, but which produced a burst of applause, succeeded by a cry on all sides of "welcome stranger! welcome!"

"Friends!" observed our hero, elevating his voice so as to render it audible to all; "I thank you for this hearty welcome; but I am cold as charity, wet as a soaked sponge, and as hungry as three—so let me warm myself, dry myself, and eat my fill, then I shall be in better spirits to thank you for your hospitality;" so saying, amidst peals of laughter, raised by his facetious frankness, he unceremoniously crossed to the opposite side of the vault, seating himself in front of a large fire that blazed in a deep niche thereof.

"Here, friend," remarked St. Marcel's guide, who had followed him to his seat; "here is thy cloak.'

"And there is thy flask," retorted St. Marcel, returning the same; "replenish it, and I will drink to our better acquaintance."

The individual took the vessel, and having assured himself of its emptiness, saluted our hero with a nod and a glance approbatory of the feat he had accomplished, inwardly satisfied that only he himself, besides, could have performed it as manfully within the same short space of time. Throwing down his basket and hooked stick, and extinguishing the light in his lantern, he proceeded to instruct a swarthy-complexioned, almost invisible atomy of humanity—whom he illustrated by the name of Æsop—relatively to the speedy production of certain nutritious articles, whereof the custody and delicate preparation for edible purposes, constituted one of the chief attributes of his office.

The culinary official immediately rendered himself invisible, the interval between his departure and his re-appearance, affording St. Marcel's guide an opportunity of enlarging upon his qualities, and of introducing a few biographical anecdotes illustrative of a portion of his private history.

"The community of the Lutetians," said he, with a significant jerk of the head in the direction of his companions, who now appeared totally indifferent to their proceedings, "owes me a heavy debt for introducing Æsop to its notice — the only debt that it ever acknowledged. A few years ago, he was a vile fabricator of soups and pottages—an obscure stewer of beef and mutton, in one of the most unclassical neighbourhoods above;" his companion here eyed the roof: "his genius exercised itself in the transformation of all kinds of flesh, into *à-la-modes*, fricassees and *fricandeaus*; one night, the officers of the Municipality laid violent hands upon certain casks of Cognac, on which Æsopus had imprudently neglected to pay the dues—but not content with his spirit, seized upon his body also, intending to treat him to a view of Paris, from the pillory. On his way to the Grêve, a band of Lutetians, led by myself—for I owed him a long score—rescued him from the guard: we brought him off in triumph, making good our retreat hither, where he has ever since remained. And now," continued he, as Æsop made his appearance, "that we have discussed his story, let us do the same honour to his dishes. Oh! what delicious repasts would the Lutetians have lost, had they not rescued Æsopus from the pillory."

"The Lutetians are followers of Epicurus, I perceive," observed St.

Marcel, commencing operations upon a cold Normandy capon exquisitely roasted—his eyes roaming over the adjuncts to the really sumptuous meal which the diminutive caterer had placed before them.

"We follow no sect in particular," retorted his companion, busily employed in dissecting the remainder of the capon: "but if any thing, we are Peripatetics. Bacchus and Venus are our divinities, in common with Plutus. We venerate our Emperor, respect the laws established by ourselves for the advancement of the weal of Lutetia, and live as joyously as we can, upon such means as chance and our respective avocations assist us to. Pray what's thy name, friend."

"St. Marcel le Trouvé," responded our hero, unwilling to withhold his name, lest the circumstance should excite suspicion, yet equally averse to give a fictitious one.

Marcellus!" observed his friend musingly; "a good name! a classical name! quite Lutetian! mine is Democritus amongst my comrades; we Lutetians abjure *baptismal* registers! Marcellus, thy health; whilst Democritus lives, thou shalt never want a friend in Lutetia!"

The philosopher, pouring out wine into two large crystal goblets, handed one to St. Marcel, and drunk off the other at a draught; an example followed by his companion, after a fashion too that left no doubt as to his capability of appreciating its very excellent quality.

Although intent upon effecting the disappearance of the dainties provided by Æsopus of Lutetia, our hero took advantage of certain intervals, to examine Democritus and his companions unperceived, as likewise the extraordinary locality to which he had been brought.

The language, manners, and general appearance of the philosopher, formed a striking contrast to his garb; the latter, however, was in perfect keeping with his ostensible pursuit, the emblems of which consisted of a dark lantern, a basket of peculiar form and capacity, and a thick stick, about four feet in length, furnished at the lower extremity, with a formidable iron hook. St. Marcel recognised him as appertaining to the class called *chiffonniers*, individuals pursuing, principally at dead of night, a mysterious occupation, the main object of which is the collecting of old rags, paper and bones, with indefinite stray articles of trifling value, *likely* to be *lost* or *mislaid* by the negligence of waiters or servants.

It is natural to conclude, that to embark in this very light, genteel business, requires no extent of capital, nor, absolutely, that the individual engaged therein, should be lavish in point of personal decoration—therefore, the fact will not surprise, that with a total disregard of the world's solicitude on the score of appearances, and in accordance with the principles of his school, Democritus observed strict simplicity of costume, contenting himself with the positive necessaries—eschewing even a portion of these, to an extent, that in a measure left him open to public observation. Worn, more for use than show, his apparel was not remarkable for uniformity: a grey slouch-hat, originally fitted to a head two or three trifles less than his own—a boot and a shoe that had appertained to distinct owners, the latter square-toed and bebuckled, the cast-off relic of some *maire-d'arrondissement*, the former,

an invalid, retired from military service—a coat and a waistcoat of antediluvian fashion, entitled to veneration as *holy* relics—these, with equally antiquated buckskin etcæteras—formed in the aggregate, the extent of his personal wardrobe.

Although not particularly captivated by the external embellishments of the philosopher's person, St. Marcel was struck with his intelligent countenance—his superior air and manners—the polish of his discourse—which, totally at variance with the meanness of his calling, led him to conclude that he belonged to a class, far superior to the one he now condescended to frequent, and which, from the specimen before him, he inferred to be of a decidedly equivocal character. He was, however, too much engrossed in the scene to follow up his speculations upon the identity of Democritus, his attention being devoted to his companions, some twenty or thirty in number, engaged in making the most of the present time, after a fashion still in vogue in companies where license is illimited, and wine abundant.

But the locality more particularly attracted his notice. It was a spacious vault of oblong form, apparently measuring sixty feet long by fifty in width, and nearly the same in height. On one side, extending its entire length, rose three lofty arches—the middle one, of greater span and dimensions than its two supporters—dividing the principal hall from a second, evidently smaller, but plunged in darkness and untenanted. On the opposite side, *that* where St. Marcel was seated, several deep recesses were elaborated in the face of the wall, in one of which a large wood fire blazed fiercely, the smoke forming a canopy, and escaping leisurely through a large aperture overhead. Immediately facing the breach in the masonry through which our hero entered, was a small square door, and above it, an opening fashioned like a window, but unfurnished with the usual accompaniments: the ribs of the vaulted roof reposed upon stone brackets mortised in the face of the walls, sculptured in the form of the prow of a ship—a symbol of the ocean—those on the southern side, based upon the arches, being varied by figures of men representative of heathen gods; the arches themselves were supported by fluted pilasters, their span being perfectly semicircular: against them, some half dozen torches were fixed, which throwing a dull light through the hall, brought out in relief the groups of figures assembled around some three or four tables, literally groaning under the united weight of numberless quaintly-fashioned pitchers of wine, and the elbows of the bacchanals.

The assemblage was motley, and diversely arrayed: there sat the exquisite, august in an exuberance of lace frill and ruffle; the student in modest suit of brown, whose demure cut, gave the lie to his jovial countenance; the seminarist, furtively escaped from priestly tutelage, encased in garbardine of solemn black, with clerks of the university, in hanging sleeves, and square-topped cap, boisterously echoing the laugh raised by their own sallies; the pink of fashion bobnobbing with decayed gentility—the laced coat, with the grey hose and jerkin—the learned student with the artisan—the embryo

Lycurgus, with the disciple of Galen and Hippocrates: here and there, rudely shaped wooden-benches, turned topsy-turvy—drinking-vessels promiscuously dispersed amongst the feet of the guests—three or four long tables, partially covered with the remnants of a meal, relieved by huge bowls of flaming spirits—various articles of apparel cast loose upon the floor—dice and dominoes rattling—glasses and goblets clashing—voices intermingling in joyous dissonance—such was the scene which St. Marcel witnessed, and in which he himself figured as an actor of no inconsiderable importance.

"Strange," thought he, "that I should be brought into such company; and in such a manner! this adventure will be productive of results far from agreeable perhaps; but I will be upon my guard. Methinks too I have met some of those faces before; but where? *that* I can't remember. Well! never mind where! I shall be able to recognize them again—that is *if* they ever afford me the opportunity; as for the locality—thy science is at fault, St. Marcel! the geographers surely neglected to lay down this underground kingdom in their charts, and thou must be content to know only that it is called Lutetia."

"Fine ancient domicile, this," remarked Democritus from behind his goblet, causing his dark eyes to revolve around the hall, "and very extensive; thou seemest to be struck with it, friend Marcellus."

"Not less than with its occupants," responded our hero; "pray is the gang numerous?"

Democritus smiled, and with an inclination of the head, replied:

"We form a commonwealth, friend Marcellus—not a gang."

"Let it be a commonwealth, most worthy Democritus, if such be thy wish: may I ask its number?" continued St. Marcel.

"It is both numerous and select," returned the philosopher; "some five or six hundred, perhaps; all united for one purpose."

"Which is?" asked our hero, with a glance at the company, indicative of its equivocal character.

"The secret of the Lutetians," coolly replied his companion.

"Are you not afraid of its being betrayed?" continued St. Marcel.

"We have all a common interest, not to betray it," answered Democritus; "nay! didst thou know us better, thou wouldst to-morrow be a Lutetian."

"And what should I gain by becoming a citizen of this subterraneous community?" inquired St. Marcel; "methinks thy recognition for instance, on one of our public promenades, would do me little honour; that is to say, unless thy costume were rather more *distingué*."

Democritus looked intently at his companion, as he responded.

"Yet, friend Marcellus, my hand was stretched out to a id thee in a noble act."

The officer of Musketeers blushed, feeling the force of the reproof; extending his hand, which Democritus cordially shook, he replied:

"Thou wilt excuse that speech of mine, my friend; I am not yet a philosopher, but a slave to the usages of society in Paris."

"Which are, that a generous heart," interrupted his companion, "must repress the outward expression of his feelings; that a *roué*

would demean himself, did he touch the hand of an honest man, if his garb—" here his eyes glanced over his own— " were not quite a-la-mode ; " but fear not, Marcellus ; a Lutetian's recognition is not to be contemned, and never causes shame to the object of it."

Our hero was sorely puzzled in his attempts to fathom the philosopher's meaning ; that he was not what he appeared, he felt convinced, but as he seemed disinclined to satisfy him as to the common interests of the Lutetians, St. Marcel changed the conversation by a remark relative to the locality wherein they were assembled.

"Its age is fourteen centuries," said the philosopher, in reply; "our palace is not elegant, but it has the advantage of being solid."

"A palace for rats as well as Lutetians," retorted our hero, smiling.

"A palace for emperors, say, friend Marcellus ; hast thou never heard of the *Palais des Thermes ?*"*

St. Marcel started : he *had* heard of it, but only as belonging to the past: as associated with the Cæsars of ancient Gaul—with the mighty revolutions that had strengthened the power of the kings of the first race—with the gradual establishment of the empire of France, on the ruins of its ancient self: a mass of history, long forgotten, crowded fresh upon his memory ; scene after scene passed before him, vividly coloured by his imagination, and in so brief a space of time, that his companion scarcely noticed his abstraction.

"I had been led to suppose no vestige of it remained," remarked he, observing that the philosopher appeared to expect an answer.

"As the Palais des Thermes, it is known only to a few," responded Democritus ; "the rest regard it merely as a convenient resort, where they are safe from pursuit—"

"Then," interrupted St. Marcel, inwardly gratified that the philosopher's incaution had afforded him a clue to the mode of life followed by his companions, "I may infer that the Lutetians have cause to fear the agents of justice."

* *The Palais des Thermes*, or Thermal Palace, was built by Constantius Chlorus, during the period that he reigned as Cæsar over Gaul, from the year 292 to 306. It was originally destined, as its name indicates, for public baths, but from its great extent, and the many additions made to it, served as the winter residence of his successors ; one of whom, his grandson Julian, surnamed the Apostate, so augmented it that its origin is, by some historians attributed to him. Its extent was immense, and that of its subterraneous chambers or halls, of which two only are at the present day accessible, such as to form a complete city of arches and passages, whose number and intricacy baffle description. The site of the grounds and gardens annexed to the palace, is clearly defined by ancient chroniclers, as the enclosure, which, at a later period, received the appellation of the " *Clos de Lias*," now called the " *Rue St. André des arcs*," and which extended from beyond the present Rue St. Jacques, to the church of St. Germain des Prés, being bounded on the north by the Seine, and on the south by the *Mont St. Michel*, on which the principal edifice was erected. The Sorbonne stands on the ruins of the eastern wing. In 1819, the Prefect of the department purchased the house forming the only entrance to the remains of the palace ; it was situated as mentioned above—No. 53, in the *Rue de la Harpe*. The house being demolished, the two halls now shewn to the curious, were cleared of the rubbish and stones that encumbered them ; but in consequence of the foundations of the new houses partially interrupting their connexion, all endeavours to explore the subterraneous passages proved fruitless, and the attempt was abandoned. A portion of the Theodosian Code emanated from this subterraneous dwelling.

His comrade burst into a loud laugh, saying:

"Less cause than the agents of justice to fear the Lutetians; but seek not, friend Marcellus, to know more, until thou hast seen the Emperor; him thou mayest interrogate—do it boldly, and he will boldly answer: 'tis near his time of coming, for midnight must be close at hand." So saying, Democritus completed the disappearance of the capon and its adjuncts, and filling his goblet with wine, pushed the pitcher over to St. Marcel, observing:

"Don't fear the wine, Marcellus; 'tis genuine from the golden vines of Burgundy; here's to the weal of Lutetia, and to the honour of thy introduction."

Our hero had already dipped deeply into the pitcher of excellent Chablis that the munificence of Œsopus had provided for the especial consumption of himself and Democritus, and began to experience a sensation which endowed his eyes with the faculty of practising the third fundamental rule of arithmetic; with an effort, therefore, that savoured strongly of philosophy, he declined the offer of his companion, responding to his sentiment, however, by emptying his own goblet of the remainder of its contents.

At this interesting moment—when under the combined influence of the brandy, the wine, and the warmth of the fire, St. Marcel was nearly committing a breach of decorum, by a loud tribute to Somnus, the small door already mentioned was flung back, and the appearance of an individual of majestic stature gave the signal for a general shout of, "the Emperor! the Emperor!"

Our hero started to his feet, passing his hand over his eyes, as if to disencumber the lids from an imaginary weight that prevented them from opening, and gazed at the new comer, after a manner that, to Democritus, appeared marvellously derogatory to the dignity of his Lutetian Majesty.

"Good night, friends," remarked the latter, with a most affable nod, intended as a mark of recognition to every body, but which struck St. Marcel as directed particularly to *him*. Casting off an ample cloak in which his large frame was encased, as also a slouch-hat in distressed circumstances, he strode to the upper end of the principal table, and took up a recumbent position in a large carved oaken chair, which St. Marcel had not before perceived; his Majesty then embraced one of the earthen pitchers that stood before him, and looking fixedly at our hero, exclaimed in a loud voice:

"Friends! the health of our new brother, citizen St. Marcel le Trouvé!"

Whether this was his Lutetian Majesty's usual mode of inducting a brother into the community, or that the Lutetians were accustomed to his abrupt manner of impressing strangers thereinto, is of little consequence, only in so far that it may tend to explain why the proceeding, in the present instance, created no surprise—except in the breast of St Marcel himself and of the philosopher: the astonishment of the latter, however, was scarcely perceptible, so promptly did he respond to the sentiment of the Emperor—a sentiment equally honoured by his companions, who, besides following

the example set by their chief, further testified their gratification at this accession to their numbers, by three distinct *vivats*, expressive of the general wish of the Lutetians then and there assembled, that their brother, citizen St. Marcel le Trouvé, might enjoy for an indefinite number of years to come, the pleasure of their acquaintance, and that of an uninterrupted state of salubrity.

To the worthy citizen so distinguished, this mark of courtesy, but especially the act that prompted the manifestation thereof, appeared far from legitimate: conscious that there now remained open to him, one course alone, that of immediate action, and that it was only prudent to yield to the force of circumstances and to a majority of voices, he determined upon propitiating the favourable opinion of his companions by assuming an appearance of perfect freedom, and placing himself, at once, on an equal footing with them. As soon therefore as the noisy expression of their felicity at having him amongst them, had subsided, our hero, closely followed by Democritus, advanced towards the regal chair, and saluting its occupant with an irreproachable obeisance, thus addressed the company:

"Friends! I should say, brother-citizens of Lutetia! The honour you have done me, is doubtless great; I feel convinced, that had you not considered me equally worthy as yourselves of becoming a Lutetian, you would not have conferred it upon me. His Majesty the Emperor," here he inclined his body towards that individual, "has the advantage of me in being acquainted with my name—a circumstance, I admit, that somewhat surprises me, since I do not at present remember, ever having enjoyed the *beatitude* of his company.

"The Pont-Neuf!" ejaculated his Majesty, with an emphasis that appeared to puzzle the neophyte in a most remarkable manner.

"My memory is treacherous on this occasion," replied St. Marcel; "and I must confess your Majesty's features could not then have made a *remarkable* impression on me, though I would now be sworn to recognize them at any future time: however, as I cannot, nay, do not seek, to disprove my identity with the St. Marcel le Trouvé known to your Majesty, I am content to remain perplexed how you became acquainted with my name and person. With regard then, to my induction into this community; I dare say it has been effected according to Lutetian law; one trifling omission, however, has been made, which, in my very humble opinion, militates against my being duly elected: it is that my consent is wanting to the act—"

"We need it not," interrupted the Emperor, making an appeal to the pitcher by way of strengthening his decision.

"Will your Majesty excuse my doubting that fact?" inquired St. Marcel, in the blandest manner possible.

"Dost thou doubt *that*?" responded the former, in a determined tone, placing before St. Marcel's eyes a small strip of parchment, which the latter had scarcely perused, than he turned ghastly pale, his countenance undergoing so great a change, that even Democritus was surprised, and tendered him a bumper of wine to shore up his falling courage.

St. Marcel drank the wine, with an abstracted air, his eyes fixed

upon the parchment: as he recovered his self-possession, the chief of the Lutetians arose, and addressing him, said:

"Well, friend, dost thou consent to become one of us? choose! Lutetia, or this!" here he laid his finger on the fatal paper.

"The Bastile," replied our hero, "is bad enough, I confess—but rather *that* than dishonour! How do I know to what I engage myself, if I choose Lutetia? Answer me, man; and if I *can* choose, I will!"

"Boldly answered," exclaimed Jacques—for it was he who spoke; "take my guarantee, that thy choice of Lutetia, shall not pledge thee to dishonour."

There was something in Jacques, so noble and imposing, so open, so manly, and such sincerity in his gaze, that our hero, almost unconsciously tendered him his hand, and, waving the other in the air with an animation that threatened serious detriment to the physiognomy of the philosopher causing him to pour out an involuntary libation—exclaimed:

"I cannot hesitate: Lutetia! Lutetia!"

This announcement was received with louder acclamations than before, the whole assembled company rising simultaneously, and reiterating:

"Lutetia! Lutetia! Lutetia and St. Marcel for ever!"

On the philosopher, our hero's resolution produced an effect that manifested itself in a variety of gestures, too complicated to enumerate: setting aside that his individual lungs performed more than a solo part in a very effective chorus—that his hand, upholding a goblet, revolved over his head with a rapidity that menaced the arm itself with luxation — that he squeezed St. Marcel's disengaged digitals with a violence that made their owner wince—he at last took a flying leap from the spot where he stood, alighting upon the table with remarkable precision, and again raised the cry of "Lutetia! Lutetia! Lutetia and St. Marcel for ever!" having concluded which oratorical effort, he laid profane hands upon one of the gigantic pitchers, and converting it into a temporary seat, looked complacently around upon his brother-citizens, signifying to them, by a succession of the very blandest smiles, distributed generally, that he felt superlatively happy.

These evolutions were completed in too brief a space of time, and took the company too much by surprise to afford his Majesty any opportunity of repressing this outward expression of the feelings uppermost in the philosopher's breast: nor did he even appear to consider them derogatory to his dignity, for on Democritus favouring him, in turn, with a stray smile, he with great condescension returned the compliment, casting a side-glance upon St. Marcel, which seemed to convey an opinion, that the eccentricities of the philosopher must be attributed to the excitement consequent upon the induction of a new brother, conjointly with the effect of his libations in honour of the ceremony: whether the former or the latter, however, had operated the more potently, the glance did not precisely intimate.

Taking advantage of a partial lull, Jacques again addressed our hero:

"Thou dost not, then, remember me, friend? yet was our rencounter a remarkable one."

Coupling this remark with Jacques' mention of the Pont-Neuf, a glimmer of the truth flashed across St. Marcel's mind, and he exclaimed:

"Our rencounter? the Pont-Neuf? thou wert the Capuchin!"

"No!" replied Jacques, smiling.

"'T was thou, then, who assailed me from behind; no great marvel, truly, that I could not recognize thee. But who was *he?*"

"The Duke of Chartres," whispered Jacques, narrowly watching St. Marcel's countenance, as if anxious to read the thoughts that the communication would suggest.

When it is known, that during the week of his confinement—the greater portion of which time had been spent at the bedside of St. Leu—the latter had made our hero the confident of his love for Julie—of his projected marriage with her—of his jealousy of the unknown Capuchin, for St. Marcel had concealed nothing from his friend, and that he had further commissioned him to prosecute an inquiry into the mysterious transfer of the ring, which he now retained as evidence of his betrothed's faithlessness—it will readily be inferred that, first on the score of his friend's happiness, Jacques' information was likely to engender in St. Marcel's mind, reflections any but agreeable; and secondly, tended to increase the enormity of his own offence, inasmuch as it informed him that he had, by a strange coincidence of circumstances, robbed the royal Duke of a mistress, love-token, and become the restorer thereof to his rival, the original donor; *his* punishment was imminent, nor could he clearly perceive how his connection with the Lutetians would avert or tend to mitigate it: as this point most nearly affected him, he determined upon acquiring a piece of information so essential to his well-being, and again addressed Jacques:

"Surely his Highness did not recognise me?"

"No!" replied the Emperor, "or thou would'st ere this have been in the Bastile."

St. Marcel observed, that, as he uttered these words, Jacques eyed him, and fingered, in a most provoking manner, the parchment that he still held in his hand: it might or might not have been done intentionally, but it produced a thrilling effect upon his nerves, and caused a notion to arise, that it would not be so very difficult for the Emperor to accomplish the destruction of the document: he eyed the paper intently, and then Jacques—then the paper again, and again Jacques, who guessing how matters stood, patiently awaited St. Marcel's query, which was not long forthcoming:

"May I ask," said he, "what are thy intentions with respect to that very interesting piece of parchment? and how my incarceration in the delightful locality it mentions, may be postponed, or altogether dispensed with?"

"I will show thee," retorted Jacques, "the extent of a Lutetian's friendship; the paper I shall keep as a guarantee for thy secrecy, but the community must be made acquainted with its purport. Here

Jacques by a peremptory sign, silenced his companions, thus addressing them: "Friends! any one of you may gain three thousand crowns, by discovering and arresting, in the name of the king, a certain officer of Musketeers, accused of having robbed his Highness, the Duke of Chartres, of a diamond ring."

Whether owing to the peculiar emphasis with which Jacques delivered himself, giving the company reason to suspect that St. Marcel was the identical officer of musketeers alluded to, certain it is, that the latter experienced a great degree of trepidation on finding suddenly concentrated upon himself, the united eyes of the Lutetians there assembled, nor were his sensations more pleasureable to hear Jacques deliver an elaborate description of his person—a description so vivid and minute, he felt that had he never beheld his own image reflected in a mirror, he might thenceforth have dispensed with that luxury: the spy terminated his address by reading aloud the inscription on the parchment, which was as follows:

"*Sieur Jacques!*

Find the individual who robbed his Highness in disguise, and convey him to the Bastile, for which this is thy warranty. I leave directions with the Governor. This done, thou shalt receive three thousand crowns.

D'Argenson."

"Do you know the individual?" continued Jacques to his companions.

"St. Marcel!" shouted a score of voices.

"Right, friends!" observed his Lutetian Majesty; "but St. Marcel is now one of us; you will therefore give him notice of danger, and if necessary, rescue him therefrom by force."

"Lutetia! Lutetia! Lutetia and St. Marcel!" resounded unanimously through the hall; a manifestation of public opinion in which Democritus particularly distinguished himself.

"What was thy object in making known the contents of that document?" inquired our hero of Jacques, as soon as the acclamation had subsided.

"As some one must be taken," coolly retorted the spy; "I thought prudent to put them on their guard against taking the right man by mistake."

"Have I then purchased my liberty at the expense of an unoffending fellow-creature?" asked St. Marcel—a blush of indignation overspreading his features.

"The Lutetians love justice," responded Jacques; "thou canst save thy substitute by paying the amount of thy own ransom!"

"Three thousand crowns!" exclaimed St. Marcel; "I possess not so many *sols*."

"Leave that to me," whispered Jacques, pressing his hand, and gazing significantly at him, as he again addressed the company: "as a proof of his good-will towards this community, citizen St. Marcel le Trouvé has intimated his intention of paying into my hands, for its use, the three thousand crowns offered for his apprehension, and I will be his guarantee for the same."

This announcement gave the signal for a fresh burst of applause,

in the midst of which Jacques retired to the inner hall, first intimating to our hero, a desire of speaking with him on the morrow, upon an affair of weight.

A few moments sufficed to banish from St. Marcel's mind all thoughts of the past, for with Jacques, disappeared the impression that his extraordinary communication had created: abandoning himself, therefore, with his customary elasticity of spirits, to the enjoyment of the present moment, and possessing an inexhaustible fund of humour, he rapidly ingratiated himself into the good graces of his Lutetian brethren, notwithstanding that both at cards and at dice Fortune favoured him to an extent, perfectly unprecedented, and which might even have led to a supposition of his having some private mode of assisting himself to the fickle goddess' favours.

Democritus had constituted himself and his pitcher conjointly, the centre of a small circle, the loud mirth of whose members, amply proved their approbation of *his* philosophy, in preference to that of Diogenes, and when our hero quitted the table, for the purpose of snatching an hour's repose, (wrapt up in his cloak by the fire) his friend the philosopher was delivering himself of a remarkable piece of oratory, to the effect that St. Marcel's introduction to their community, had much augmented its happiness—that the community of the Lutetians was positively the happiest in existence—and that he considered he was justified in asserting himself to be, individually, the happiest Lutetian belonging to it—a climax, of which the effect was in a certain degree, marred, by the slipping away of the pitcher from beneath him, causing him to descend amongst his companions after a fashion, perfectly unique, but in no wise graceful, nor calculated to inspire the beholder with any conviction, save that the philosopher had become totally unable longer to preserve his natural equilibrium.

CHAPTER XVI.

A VISIT TO VERSAILLES. MADAME DE MAINTENON. THE SUPPLIANT.

From the *Palais des Thermes*, and Jacques, *alias* the Emperor Julian, the Reader must convey himself to Versailles—Versailles the magnificent—with her countless halls and galleries—her marble stair-cases—her gorgeous saloons and boudoirs—her cascades and *chateaux-d'eau*—her parks, with their green slopes, limpid lakes and interminable vistas, thickly planted with teils, poplar, beech and horse-chesnut-trees; and last in order, though not in beauty, splendour or uniqueness, her delightful dependencies—offsprings of the same shoot—the Trianons, with their secluded pavilions, rustic cottages and Paphian bowers—the silent witnesses of their royal lord's secret pleasures—the nurseries of court-jealousies, intrigues and cabals—of unacknowledged hates and unpropitiateable vengeances.

In her *boudoir*—situated on the opposite side of the same landing as the suite of apartments occupied by her royal consort, sat Françoise d'Aubigné de Maintenon, attended by her old female-servant,

Babbien—the former, listlessly sipping chocolate, served in a rich Sêvres porcelain-cup—the latter, deeply absorbed in the nice adjustment of her august mistress' tiny slipper.

The great clock of the Palace had just chimed noon, but although a clear, frosty day, with a bright sun shining in an almost brighter sky, scarcely a crepuscular light illumined the elegant apartment adorned by her presence.

It was a small square room, owning two windows and a couple of doors, one of the latter opening into her private chamber, the other, communicating with the principal landing; the view from the former, commanding the great park and its appurtenances. The walls, as likewise the cushions and the backs of the elaborately carved chairs, the ottoman and the stool upon which her foot reposed, were decorated with the finest specimens of Gobelins-tapestry, illustrative of the victories gained by the Marshals of Louis Quatorze, and of the principal events of his reign; before each seat, was placed a small square piece of the same material, bordered with a fringe of crimson-silk — guarantees against the slipperiness of the highly-polished oaken-floor — a rug of Persia-carpet lay in front of the raised hearth, on which blazed and crackled some three or four ponderous logs of wood—the black marble mantle-shelf, supported by fluted pilasters of the same, and surcharged with china-ornaments of the choicest kind, and by a magnificent time-piece manufactured by Nicolas Grollier de Serviére, representing the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, was surmounted by a plate of Venetian looking-glass, in a frame richly carved and gilt, overtopped by an exquisitely wrought marble bust of the *grand monarque* —the ceiling painted in fresco by Le Moine, in his best style, represented the Monarch habited in a Roman costume, drawn in a triumphal car, with nymphs and curly-headed Cupids preceding it, and strewing flowers in his path—the doors, of a dead white, with panels and beading profusely gilt—purple velvet curtains, drawn so close as nearly to exclude the day-light—two or three tables with curiously variegated marble-slabs and carved legs—an ebony cabinet, inlaid with ivory, which, partially open, disclosed some rare and costly *parures*, flasks of rich perfumes, and numerous nick-nacks and luxuries of the toilet, that only French women can appreciate—here and there vases of flowers fresh from the conservatory, culled in the height of their beauty only to be a moment admired, then wither and die—a work-table bestrewed with the emblems of female industry, and a few of its fruits in the shape of embroidery —these constituted the chief embellishments of the chamber in which, as before stated, sat Madame de Maintenon—herself the greatest ornament that graced it.

Although she had just completed her thirteenth lustre, time had laid a light finger on her beauty, and increase of years, whilst it had more than matured, had scarcely impaired her personal charms; her symmetrical figure, extremely young, and inclined to embonpoint, was remarkable for gracefulness and elegance, whilst her fine, expressive countenance betrayed few signs of the encroachments of

age: her deep blue eyes still sparkled with youthful vivacity—her dark chesnut hair, smoothly plaited in broad bands over her fair forehead, and turned up loosely behind into a *chignon*, fastened by massive gold-pins set with jewels, was abundant and unsilvered—her lips, plump and rosy, formed a striking contrast to the paleness of her cheeks; her teeth too, as she now and then addressed her attendant, peeped up through her well-formed smiling mouth, regular and white, looking, not like two rows of pearls, but like the very whitest teeth that ever adorned the mouth of a young beauty, vain of her dental attractions: the expression of her face was thoughtful—nay, even grave—though devoid of any approach to austerity, a character of benevolence pervading it, that spoke at once to the heart, prepossessing the affections in her favour: still, there existed with it a certain haughtiness of manner, an intensity of gaze, that betrayed the spirit within—the existence of an indomitable will—an inflexibility of decision, which, once adopted, either for a good or a baneful end, would pursue its object in spite of every obstacle opposed to its attainment: such was Madame de Maintenon, the consort of Louis Quatorze.

Many and contradictory are the opinions and reports transmitted to posterity, with respect to her character; but whilst the veil has been raised from her weaknesses, the same hands have cast a thick mantle over her virtues.

Born within the sombre walls of a prison,* and nursed in the lap of trouble, she appears to have been predestined to experience the frowns and the Favours of fortune to an almost unprecedented extent.

Transported to the transatlantic continent, when only three years of age, the negligence of a domestic, nearly occasioned her a frightful death;† at twelve, she found herself an orphan, bereft of both parents, a dependent upon the charity of a near relative, whose harshness caused her joyfully to accept the offer of marriage made to her by Paul Scarron, the burlesque writer and wit. A wife at sixteen—the wife too of a man whose body was as deformed as his mind was noble and elevated, her beauty attracted notice, whilst her talents and superior intellectual attainments, nurtured and matured by her husband, distinguished her amongst the choicest of Parisian society, who sought her company with emulative eagerness: a widow at twenty-five years of age, without fortune, not even enjoying the modest pension of fifteen hundred livres that the King's bounty had conferred upon her late husband—she lived retired, unknown, almost

* At Niort in Poitou, where her father and mother were imprisoned by order of the court. The former was Constant d'Aubigné, son of Theodore-Agrippa d'Aubigné, gentleman of the chamber in ordinary to Henri Quartre; the latter, the daughter of a Bordelais, named Cardillac, Governor of Château Trompette, from which prison she delivered the man, who in gratitude made her his wife; he took her to Carolina, on their return from which country, they were, as already stated, imprisoned at Niort, where Madame d'Aubigné gave birth to our heroine.

† A servant left the child on the banks of the river; during her absence, a large serpent attacked her, from whose fangs she was saved only by a miracle; the domestic returning hastily, startled the reptile, which crept away leaving the infant unharmed.

forgotten, for the space of two years, when the monarch, at the request of Madame de Montespan, the reigning favourite, granted her an annuity of two thousand livres, upon which she again emerged into the world, the centre of a select circle of admiring friends.

It is more than probable that Madame Scarron would never have been personally introduced to the notice of Louis Quatorze, but for the circumstance of the Duke du Maine, his son by Madame de Montespan, being born with a deformity of the foot, the for treatment which necessitating a journey to the Barége-spa, a confidential person was sought, to whom the child might be entrusted: the King remembered Madame Scarron, and through the agency of Monsieur de Louvois, proposed that she should undertake the care and education of the Duke; from this period she corresponded, regularly, with his Majesty—her letters pleased him—her merit completed her fortune.

How great the uncertainty of human affairs! but greater still the uncertainty of the chances that open the channel to high fortune! In this instance a deformed foot kicks down the formidable barrier between Royalty and Plebeianism—a sickly infant's hand lifts a pauper girl into the regal marriage-bed.

Strange to say, Louis Quatorze could not at first habituate himself to Madame Scarron—but his aversion faded by degrees, and grew into confidence—his confidence to love. Madame de Montespan daily lost favour in his eyes—Madame Scarron daily gained. Become Madame de Maintenon by right of possession of the estate so named, which she had lately purchased—and convinced of the monarch's passion for her, there sprung up between them an extraordinary interchange of tenderness and scrupulosity on his part—of ambition and devotion on hers: in 1683, the Queen of Louis Quatorze died; in 1686 he espoused de Maintenon.

Louis appears to have taken this step advisedly; he had attained his forty-eighth year, Madame de Maintenon her fifty-second, both past the age when love rules triumphant over every other sentiment; the fire too, of his youthful passions, was now nearly extinguished—he had in turn adored and repudiated, besides many others, the niece of Cardinal Mazarin, Mademoiselle de Mancini—Marie de Mancini, her sister—who afterwards married the Connétable Colonne—the Baroness de Beauvais—Mademoiselle d'Argencourt—the beautiful Mademoiselle de la Valliere, whom he quitted for the blandishments of Madame la Marquise de Montespan, the co-rival of Mademoiselle de Fontange and of the accomplished and fascinating widow of Paul Scraron. The extreme beauty and youth of Mademoiselle de Fontange, coupled with the birth of a son, which she bore the King, for a time distracted his attention from Madame de Maintenon, who although daily gaining favour, to the detriment of Madame de Montespan, was still far from holding the first place in his fickle affections; on the demise, however of De Fontange and her infant, in 1681, she began to assume the ascendency over her remaining rival, who now scarcely possessed a heart, satiated with her, and tired of her continual murmurs.

A man on the return of life who has past his youth and prime in

gallantry, and thus deadened the holy fire of virtuous love, no longer experiences, in the society of womankind, that indefineable sentiment of delight, which so mystically holds the sexes in communion—no longer appreciates that poetry of intense feeling, intended by nature, to constitute the everlasting tie between them—no longer seeks a soul congenial to his own—not as it is, but as it was—no longer craves after a kindred spirit, that shall feel, and think, and enjoy, and suffer with him in sweet companionship: his appetite is palled—the reciprocative vitality of his soul is extinguished—he is become a creature of indefinite wants, of confirmed habits—of active passions diverted by satiety into a new channel: he seeks a friend—a complaisant companion, in whose society he can taste the honey of female tenderness mellowed to suit his cloyed palate—whose presence shall disburden him of his load of cares—whose smile shall illuminate the small world that now remains to him, and from which he has obliterated the traces of every living affection save self!

The secret of Madame de Maintenon's empire over the affections, or rather, the habits of Louis Quatorze, consisted in the charms of her mental acquirements, rather than of her person, though the latter were of remarkable potency; her mind, liberally endowed by nature, had been cultivated by reading and by frequenting the company of the first literary men of the day; she possessed an exhaustless fund of anecdote, a constant flow of wit and pleasantry, which, directed by her excellent judgment, shone with tenfold brilliancy in sprightly repartees; her conversation, unaffected and insinuating, scintillated with vivacity and sense; she wrote with peculiar ease and grace, her style, self-formed, being a compound of art and nature, elegantly harmonized; thus, the dissipated monarch found Madame de Maintenon to possess a union of graces that he vainly sought in his other mistresses, and though his infidelities to her were numerous, he always returned to her, more captivated than ever.

Struggling between his ancient attachment to Madame de Montespan, whom he felt some delicacy in openly repudiating, his newly-kindled love for Mademoiselle de Fontange, whom he passionately admired, and the powerful attractions of Madame de Maintenon, whose elegant conversation and society every day exercised increasing influence over him, rendering them every day more necessary, his mind was a continual prey to conflicting sentiments, over which, however, he could not determine upon relinquishing the ascendency in favour of either.

The death of the object of his adoration and of the pledge of their mutual passion, destroyed the last tie upon his worn-out affections; his grief rendered him thoughtful, and he began to feel compunction on the score of his connection with Madame de Montespan, whose husband, the Marquis, still lived. These prickings of conscience had arisen from the moment that he ceased to love the Marchioness, and partially owed their origin to the religiousness of her rival, who, perceiving the secret power which she was daily acquiring, conducted herself with the artful reserve natural to women of a certain age, when bent upon conquest, enlisting

religion in her service, not, as Voltaire cynically observes, "*to succour her failing charms,*" but to supplant Madame de Montespan in the king's favour, by diverting his thoughts into a new channel. Her's was a struggle, not of love against love, but of ambition against the established empire of a rival, whose youth and beauty faded, no longer possessed the power of preserving it. Her acts of piety gave a colour to her intrigues; her conduct forming that extraordinary mixture of religion and gallantry, of ambition and devotion, of dignity and weakness, characteristic of the human heart—an inconsistency alike common to Louis Quatorze and to herself.

On the marriage of Mademoiselle de Blois, (her daughter by the king) to the Duke of Chartres, Madame de Montespan retired voluntarily from the court, unable longer to support the mortification caused by the king's preference of the new favourite, whom she left, the undisputed mistress of the remainder of Louis' affections.

Madame de Maintenon now acquired such ascendency over his mind, and so infected it with religious scruples relatively to the nature of their *liaison*, that the monarch, accustomed to the charms of her conversation, long habituated to see her about his person, and moreover, desirous of alleviating the cares of government by an admixture of the sweets of retirement, determined, by the advice of his Confessor, Le Père la Chaise, to unite himself to his mistress; accordingly, in the month of January of the before-mentioned year, the marriage was solemnized in a small chapel at Versailles, by the Archbishop of Paris, Harlai de Chanvalon, in the presence of the king's venerable confessor, one Montchevreuil, and Bontems the first valet-de-chambre; their union however, remained an unsolved problem at court, whilst the only public distinction that betrayed her secret elevation to the dignity of king's consort, was her occupation at high-mass, of one of the small state-pews originally erected for his Majesty and his late Queen. Her religious sentiments, with which she had infected the king, but which she had employed only as a mask, to cover her intrigue, became in after years, sincere and profound, increasing in fervour with increase of age; her exaltation left her ambition little to attain, the uniformity of her life constituting her greatest trouble, and if there can be adduced one proof more calculated than another to disabuse aspiring souls of their illusions, her own sentiments may be happily cited, when writing to her favourite, one of the cloistered devotees of the convent of St. Cyr, founded by her munificence.*

Her religious enthusiasm did not, however, entirely destroy her love of temporal sway; having gained the summit of power, she now directed the actions of the monarch, assiduously avoiding every appearance of ruling, but in reality setting in motion the machinery of the state, through the instrumentality of its first minister, Chamillart, her creature, who was in high favour with his royal master—first, on account of his unimpeachable probity, and

* "I *have been* young and beautiful; have tasted pleasure; have been beloved by all; have passed my maturer years in intellectual commerce; have arrived at the highest pinnacle of fortune. My child! all these conditions leave a frightful void!" *Vide Lettres de Madame de Maintenon.*

secondly, *because of his great skill at billiards*, a game of which Louis was excessively fond.

Although living retired, and seldom receiving company, in her boudoir the most important state-affairs were canvassed by the king and his ministers, in her presence; engaged either in reading, or at her needle-work, she appeared regardless of their discussions, even affecting ignorance of the subject under consideration—never the first to recur to it—and the last to betray a desire of provoking political intrigues or cabals: but beneath this semblance of listlessness, lay concealed an active ardent soul—capable of grasping—of comprehending—of analysing the mightiest designs, of which kind was that one towards whose accomplishment she now lent her powerful, though secret aid—so secret indeed, that even her royal consort, only at last suspected the agency, which, in the course of the ensuing year, placed his grandson, Philip d'Anjou, on the throne of Spain.

There exists not a shadow of doubt, on the score of Madame de Maintenon's sincerity of affection for Louis Quatorze, notwithstanding that she employed religious artifice to secure it; she had never loved Scarron, and on beholding herself the object of the monarch's attentions, sought less to defend her heart against the inroads of a reciprocal passion, than to consolidate its empire over him that had inspired it, whilst her religious hypocrisy may be justified by the character of her admirer, who, had she depended solely upon her attractions, would have repudiated her with as little compunction as his former loves, as soon as, like them, they ceased to charm. Having, however, accomplished the grand day-dream of her maturer years, she gave up her whole soul to the object of her temporal adoration, and devoted her stupendous energies to his elevation and aggrandizement. But in the prosecution of her schemes, even though they tended to add to her lord's greatness, she was compelled to act with great circumspection, for fear of awakening the jealousy of his ambition, which could not support a rival: her principal strength thus consisted in the employment of small means to work out great ends; in the moving of the lesser wheels of that vast machine, the State, but whose power, because concealed, was most formidable.

Acquainted with Louis' innermost thoughts, and ever on the alert to forestall his secret wishes, her's was often the indirect channel through which they were accomplished, although, with a pride that few in her position would not have sacrificed to vanity, she never assumed the credit of the act: in two instances however, this heroic modesty did not avail. Louis' determination to revoke the edict of Nantes, though mainly due to the intrigues of the Romish clergy, was in a great measure influenced by her zeal against a creed that she had abjured,* whilst her misguided enthusiasm engendered that barbarous law, by virtue of which, Calvinist children of tenderest years, were snatched from their parents' bosom, and compelled, young as they were, to abjure their infant belief, ere almost their tongue could lisp the name of the Divinity.

In the great political question, that absorbed the attention of

* She was of a Calvinist family, and followed the tenets of the sect, until the period of her marriage with Paul Scarron, when she repudiated it for Romanism

Europe at the period of Madame de Maintenon's introduction to the Reader—we allude to the Spanish succession—every eye was fixed upon Louis Quatorze, but no one thought of his consort; yet, whilst the puissant monarch was making a useless show of his right to a share in that immense inheritance, at the same time that he coveted the whole, without daring to demand it, she was covertly labouring to accomplish the desire so near his heart, and to induce, not the King of France to solicit Charles the Second of Spain to bequeath his crown and vast dominions to his (Louis,) grandson, but Charles the Second of Spain to solicit his acceptance of them.

The task was stupendous—sublime for a woman to achieve, in the teeth of the many difficulties opposed to her success; the weak monarch was at the point of death, the European powers already, in anticipation, devoured his vast heritage, consisting of the empire over Spain and half of the Western Hemisphere; each possessed agents, dispersed over the continent, exerting their utmost diplomatic skill to strengthen the influence of their patron; the clashing of political interests was unprecedented. First in the field stood Louis Quatorze, lineally descended, in a direct line, from Philip the Third of Spain—his sire, Louis Treize, having married that monarch's *elder* daughter, renouncing all right and title to the Spanish crown—an example followed by Louis Quatorze himself, on his marriage with the *eldest* daughter of Philip the Fourth; this abjuration, be it said, prevented the union of the two crowns on one head, and neutralized the preponderance such a union would give to the possessor, in the scale of power in Europe. In the second rank, figured Leopold, the Emperor of Germany, also lineally descended from Philip the Third, whose *second* daughter, his sire, Ferdinand the Third, espoused in 1631; he himself marrying Philip the Fourth's *second* daughter; thus the royal brothers-in-law had each, by right of descent, a claim to the inheritance of the heirless Charles; but Louis Quatorze had renounced his, and could not therefore enforce it, whilst the same policy that would not suffer the same head to wear the crown of France and Spain, operated to prevent the union of the latter with the imperial diadem; thus Leopold also, found himself excluded from the succession. This was the position of the two rivals at the conclusion of the treaty of Ryswick, in 1697, whilst the interests of England and Holland consisted in the maintenance of a balance of power between them; the fact was then unknown of Charles the Second having, by the influence of his consort, Marie Anne of Bavaria Neubourg, made a will in favour of the house of Austria, to which she was devoted, being the Emperor Leopold's sister-in-law; as Charles's demise appeared proximate, the European powers the more anxiously awaited that event, in the anticipation of important results.

The pretensions of Peter the Second of Portugal, were too absurd to deserve mention here; nor is it necessary to detail the complicated intrigue, by which, in 1696, the weak Spanish monarch was induced by his mother, to will away his crown and dominions to his great nephew—Maxmilian Marie, son of the Elector of Bavaria—to the prejudice of the house of Austria, and to which she belonged; nor the counter-intrigue, set on foot by his wife, and by which, he was per-

suaded to re-instate that house, in the secret will already mentioned. A knowledge of the simple fact is requisite, notwithstanding, in order to the clear comprehension of the diversity of interests which Madame de Maintenon had to combat: she stood alone, struggling against Europe, to consolidate the greatness and glory of her husband.

Whilst matters remained in this state of suspense, a new project was set on foot by the English Ambassador to the court of France, which gave a fresh spur to the spirit of intrigue, and nurtured cabals in every court throughout Europe; this was the dismemberment of the Spanish Empire, an arrangement favouring the interests of France, England, and Holland, to the almost exclusion of Austria. William the Third had espoused the new project with much eagerness, in the hope of strengthening the interests of Great Britain, and assuring peace to a part of Europe; it was proposed to allot Spain and the West Indies, as the share of the young Prince of Bavaria, Charles's great nephew, now in his fifth year; the Dauphin of France was to have Naples, Sicily, the province of Giupuscoa, and sundry cities and towns in Spain, whilst the Arch-Duke Charles, Leopold's second son, was to content himself with the Milanais. But this political project failed, for the dying King, learning that the European powers had disposed of his monarchy amongst themselves, even ere the breath had left his body, became frantic with rage and vexation, and it was expected that he would, in consequence, openly appoint, as his successor, either Leopold or one of his sons, as a recompense for the house of Austria's non-participation in the project; but he disappointed the interested parties, by making a second will in favour of his great nephew, the young Prince of Bavaria, whom he nominated sole heir to all his states.

However satisfactory this decision, to the Spanish nation—averse to a dismemberment of the empire—and however pacific its tendency, both France and Austria regretted it, especially the latter; but the sudden death of the heir-elect, at Brussels, once more kindled their ambition; again did Madrid, and Vienna, and the Hague, Rome, Versailles and London, become the theatre of intrigues, and again did William and Louis dispose of the Spanish Monarchy, by allotting to the Arch-Duke Charles, the portion they had at first, set aside for the child lately dead, the Dauphin's part remaining intact, augmented by the province of Lorraine, the Duke of which was to be installed in the Milanais, in the place of the Arch-Duke Charles. But this treaty, the Emperor Leopold refused to sign, and Charles the Second, was so indignant, on learning that the dismemberment of his states had been again made the subject of a conference, that he nearly succumbed of grief.

This succinct account will suffice to show, that in the important question of the Spanish succession, the will of that nation had never been taken into account, nor her wishes consulted: a circumstance, which though all-important, had never occurred to the rival candidates, accustomed to consider the people only as passive instruments—as slaves, whose sole duty was to bend to the yoke of despotism: but the fact had not escaped the keen observation of Madame de Maintenon, who resolved upon enlisting the nation's sympathies in behalf

of France, and of gaining those sympathies by the same influence she had once before employed to conquer Louis—the only influence she could command—that of the church.

She had maturely considered the nature of the ground, had weighed each party in the scale, had for a long time watched for a favourable opportunity of commencing her silent operations, but whilst awaiting it, had prepared herself to profit by it when it should offer.

Her privy council consisted of her creature Chamillart, her own Confessor, Gobelin, and the venerable Père la Chaise, Confessor to Louis Quatorze: the former brought her intelligence of what passed at the foreign courts, particularly at that of Madrid—the two latter opened a direct correspondence with their intimate friend, Cardinal Portocarrero, Archbishop of Toledo, and with a few of the church-ruled grandees, and lastly, with his Holiness himself, so that although her partisans were few, they were united, and possessed sufficient influence, acting in concert, to accomplish the end she desired to attain. She had likewise gained over the Marquis d'Harcourt, Louis' ambassador to Madrid, who by his profuse expenditure, his generosity, his urbanity, and extreme elegance, had produced a favourable impression upon the Spanish court, already disposing a party to support him at the fitting opportunity. She had, however, to combat many interests—to overcome the strongest prejudices; she knew that the wretched Monarch felt inclined to leave his states to his wife's nephew, the Arch-Duke Charles, Leopold's second son, not daring to bequeath them to the elder, lest he should overset the system of equilibrium which formed the ground-work of the policy of the age—but to this she opposed the project of dismemberment, less to alarm, than to keep the dying king in suspense until her emissaries should have had time to bring the pontifical court to her aid. The solemn abjuration made by her consort, of his right to the crown of Spain, was annulled by proposing the nomination of his grand-son, Philip d'Anjou, as the heir-apparent, thus preserving the Spanish monarchy, intact, without necessitating that it should devolve upon the co-heir to the crown of France: To this project she obtained the countenance of Cardinal de Janson, now at Rome, representing to him, that by weakening the influence of the house of Austria, Italy and the Holy See must gain increase of power, nor was his Holiness long, ere he joined issue with "his well-beloved daughter," and her ecclesiastical party.

To see Madame de Maintenon, as she sat in her boudoir, and to hear her chat with her waiting-woman upon the relative properties of pomatums, cosmetics, perfumes, scented waters, and other luxurious trifles, as though her only study were the toilet, one could hardly suppose her to be the woman, who was silently directing an intrigue intended to counteract the united diplomacy of Europe, converting a state-affair into a case of conscience, by engendering religious scruples in the weak mind of a dying monarch.

She was in her dishabille, consisting of a morning wrapper of the finest textured cambric, elaborately embroidered down the front, the hem being further enriched by a double flounce of exquisite Venice-lace, as were the sleeves, which, large and hanging, left her arms bare to the elbow, displaying their symmetry and dazzling whiteness.

"Well, Babbien!" exclaimed she, addressing her domestic, and at the same time casting a side-glance at her foot; "how dost thou like the pattern?"

"'Tis charming, Madame," responded Babbien, falling back in an ecstacy of admiration, abstractedly determining by a mental arithmetical process, the probable number of weeks that would elapse, before the elegant *chaussure* would come into her possession by right of perquisite. "Madame la Duchesse de Chartres," continued she, "says that she shall introduce the fashion of wearing embroidered velvet slippers for morning visits and carriage-promenades."

"Indeed!" responded her mistress, smiling; "then we shall soon have embroidered toques and coifs; the Marquise de Beauvais will introduce *them* from a spirit of opposition: their rivalry always shows itself in extremes."

"The Marquise is a coquette," observed the domestic, tossing her head contemptuously; "she trifled with the handsome Chevalier de Mont-Fleuri, till she drove him from court; and they do say, he destroyed himself, for he has never been heard of since."

"She is very young," remarked Madame de Maintenon; "very giddy, and very imprudent, although I believe her reputation to be untainted; but she enjoys the advantages of wealth, great beauty, and what some would not consider an advantage, she is a widow."

"I can't say I think her so very beautiful." responded Babbien;" I am sure that *you*, Madame, were far more handsome—and even *now* may bear comparison with her at night."

"We cannot *be*, and *have been*," remarked her mistress, pleased at her old domestic's compliment, for still vain of her attractions, she was susceptible of flattery; "I once could boast of being one of the handsomest women of France, but now"—here an eloquent sigh came to her relief—"'tis different. Hand me the glass, Babbien; and tell me, how do I look this morning?"

"A little fatigued," responded her waiting-woman, presenting her mistress with a hand glass; "Madame sat up so late last night."

"I *am* paler than usual," said Madame, mournfully;" my eyes too look fatigued; they are quite black underneath; touch my cheeks with the pencil, Babbien; lightly now; only enough to give them the slightest tinge; that will do; now a little of the white, here, to take off the leaden cast from my eyes; draw the curtains a little closer, too, Babbien; the light is too glaring."

Babbien, in obedience to her mistress' injunctions, closed the curtains against a stray sun-beam, which had inadvertently cast a reflection upon two or three scarcely perceptible wrinkles in her mistress's face.

"Madame has a red spot on her chin," observed she, after accomplishing her task; "shall I cover it with a patch?"

"Do!" responded de Maintenon, subjecting her face to the operation.

The confidential domestic extracted from a small box, a number of pieces of black sticking-plaister, of divers magnitudes and forms, and selecting one from among them, adjusted it over the offensive pimple with a dexterity that savoured of long practice.

"Well!" remarked she, when she had fixed the artificial *beauty-spot*,

"I must say that a black patch looks better than a red pimple, but they never will become Madame, unless she consents to wear powder."

Her mistress shook her head, and smiling, answered:

"Powder, Babbien, suits young complexions best; but I am of thy opinion, that patches ought to go with it. No one thought of wearing them though, until poor De Fontange's charming little mole came into repute; then every body patched, because she had a black spot on her face; had she been born with a wart on her nose instead, I do believe our coquettes would have paid a premium to posssss its fellow."

At this moment a knock came at the door, and Babbien admitted a domestic.

"A young lady desires to speak with Madame," said he, bowing.

"Who is she?" asked his mistress.

"A stranger to me, Madame; she says she comes from Paris, on very important business."

"See who it is, Babbien," said Madame de Maintenon, "if 'tis no one particular, I am not visible this morning."

The domestics withdrew, but very shortly after, the female attendant returned, followed by a young girl enveloped in a travelling-cloak of black velvet, the hood of which, thrown back, left her bare head exposed; advancing with great trepidation towards Madame de Maintenon, who rose as she entered, she exclaimed, at the same time casting herself at her feet, and conveying to her lips, the hand extended encouragingly to greet her:

"Pardon this intrusion upon your privacy, Madame, and condescend to grant me a brief audience."

"Rise, my child," soothingly responded Madame de Maintenon, already taking an interest in her young visiter, "and tell me what has brought thee to Versailles? Babbien! a seat for this young lady, and do thou withdraw awhile."

Babbien placed a chair for the stranger, and courtesying low, retired into the inner chamber, closing the door after her, but immediately applying her ear to the key-hole, in order, if possible, to catch something of the forthcoming colloquy.

"Now, my child, be seated," continued Madame de Maintenon setting the example, and drawing the maiden's chair near her own; "thou hast come hither from Paris, they tell me. What is thy name?"

"Jeanne De St. Auney," tremblingly replied the visiter, vainly endeavouring to overcome her emotion.

Madame de Maintenon reflected a moment, then shaking her head, responded:

"De St. Auney! I don't remember the name; yet, I know every noble family in Paris."

"You may perhaps remember the name of Debourges," observed Jeanne; "Constance Debourges!"

"The companion of my younger days!" exclaimed Madame de Maintenon with sudden animation.

"My mother, Madame," said Jeanne, the tears filling her eyes as she spoke.

"Thy mother!" ejaculated the former; "come, my child, let me embrace thee;" here she kissed her affectionately on both cheeks,

continuing; "'tis more than thirty years ago since we parted from each other; is she still alive?"

"She has been dead these seventeen years, Madame," replied Jeanne; "but my father is living, and I have a sister; but"—she could say no more, for sobs, and a gush of tears choked her utterance.

Madame de Maintenon did not attempt to check this burst of sorrow, knowing that it would relieve her heart; she only took her two hands within her own, and silently pressed them, awaiting an opportunity of questioning her: after a brief pause, perceiving that the violence of her grief had partially subsided, she said:

"And what of thy sister, my charming girl?"

"Oh, Madame, they have taken her to the Bastile;" continued Jeanne, hysterically, reclining her head upon Madame de Maintenon, who, affected by the maiden's sorrow, had clasped her to her bosom.

"To the Bastile!" exclaimed she; "but that is horrible! who imprisoned her, and what is her offence?"

"She was forcibly carried off from our house, at night, and conveyed thither, Madame," replied Jeanne; "but she voluntarily consented to remain there, as an hostage for my father."

"Did they then arrest him, also?" inquired the other.

"Yes Madame;" responded Jeanne; "and it was to solicit your influence to prevent his re-imprisonment, and procure my sister's release, that I came hither."

"You did not surely come alone, child?"

"No, Madame; Antoine, our old servant accompanied me; he is waiting at the gate, with the vehicle that brought us."

"Well, my child," observed Madame de Maintenon, a tear sparkling in her eye as she spoke—"if I can serve thee, I will; I fear, however, that my influence in the quarter where thou needest it most, is of no weight. But, tell me; how camest thou to seek *me*?"

"These letters, Madame, which I found some years ago, amongst my mother's effects, informed me of your early intimacy; see! here are two, from yourself to Marie-Jeanne Debourges, and here is one written by my mother and addressed to me. I have treasured it as her dying gift."

Madame de Maintenon took the letters and perused them, the tears falling upon the paper as she retraced the expression of her youthful friendship, and remembered the attachment of her companion: but the one which Jeanne placed last in her hands, spoke of herself in such tender terms, that she folded the maiden to her bosom, bedewing her with tears.

"Thy mother was right, my child," said she at length; "our friendship was indeed sincere, although circumstances removed me to a sphere unsuited to her retired habits; she quitted Paris for the province; we lost sight of each other, or rather, I lost sight of her, for this letter proves that I was in her thoughts, even at the hour of her dissolution. But in thee she lives again, and I *will* be thy protectress, my child, and thy sister's; so dry thy tears and tell me thy troubles."

Encouraged by the kind tone and manner of Madame de Mainte-

non, Jeanne ventured to return her embrace, and proceeded to detail the adventures that had happened to her and her sister since their arrival—the particulars of her father's arrest and incarceration—the scene that took place in the Bastile, in the presence of the Duke of Chartres her father's return home—his despondency at the insuccess of his measures to place himself beyond the pale of D'Argenson's persecution—and lastly, her resolution to solicit, unknown to him, the assistance of her mother's early friend.

The consort of Louis Quatorze listened with profound attention to the maiden's recital, but a frown darkened her brow, and she shook her head, on hearing the name of D'Argenson coupled with that of the Duke of Chartres. Her experience of the world, and knowledge of their character, opened her eyes to the true nature of the plot they had concocted, but the more she pondered, the more did she mistrust her power to counteract it: still she did not despair, nor allowed Jeanne to perceive her misgivings.

"D'Argenson," said she, as her *protégée* made an end, "is a base and wicked man; he is a man to be hated, but he is a man to be feared. Philip D'Orleans is an unprincipled debauchee; he is to be despised: but rest assured, my child, that I will strive to serve thy sister's cause, and to procure her liberation."

"Do you think, Madame," asked Jeanne, "that it can be done immediately?"

"Poor child," responded Madame de Maintenon, caressing Jeanne's head, "thou hast much to learn; I will not deceive thee by creating false hopes—hope however, for the best, but do not depend too much upon my intercession. Let me see thee a week hence, and accept this as an earnest of my sincerity."

So saying, she drew from off her own finger a ring set with brilliants of the first water, and placing it on Jeanne's, affectionately embraced her. The maiden was too much affected to thank her patroness, who ringing a small silver hand-bell, summoned Babbien.

The discreet domestic was perfectly prepared to attend the summons, for, finding the key-hole to be a very imperfect acoustic instrument, bringing moreover, with a very small number of words, a very large amount of wind—and being exceedingly anxious to learn what passed between her mistress and her unknown visiter—she removed her ear from the aperture, and substituted one of her eyes thereat, but as the circle of her vision was limited, including only a very small portion of Jeanne's dress, with two legs of her chair, her curiosity and anxiety were so much excited, she unconsciously turned the handle of the door, setting the latter ajar, finally protruding the least possible portion of her face through the opening, but still, sufficient to enable her both to see and hear all that went forward.

As Babbien emerged from her observatory, Madame de Maintenon again embraced Jeanne, saying: "Adieu, my child! adieu! and remember—come to me in a week from this time!" she then arose, conducted her to the door, and bidding her attendant to see her into the ante-chamber, waved her hand to Jeanne, who departed, too much overpowered to utter a word.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE CONVERSATION THAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN JACQUES AND ST. MARCEL, AND WHAT ENSUED.

Extended at full length, upon the bench before the fire, St. Marcel, from being perfectly aware of every thing that was going forward in the hall amongst his Lutetian brethren, unconsciously reverted to the tragic occurrence which had been the means of bringing him into their company; but whilst he retraced the features of the would-be suicide, fancy associated them with scenes of earlier days: one after the other, these flitted before his eyes, broken and confused—here light, here darkness: faint pictures they were, truly, of what had been—pictures real and tangible, though indistinct, of which he had for years lost sight, or only now and then caught glimpses, in dreams like these: in vain he strove to grapple with the past—link after link in the chain of circumstance snapped, and vision after vision faded, until at last nothing remained but obscurity and oblivion.

Uneasy upon his hard couch, he turned restlessly from side to side, the revelry of his companions disturbing his fitful slumbers; gradually, however, their mirth became less clamorous—song after song died away, as, one by one, the bacchanals withdrew—the torches sputtered and smouldered into smoking embers—the fire ceased throwing out its cheerful blaze, and at last, St. Marcel sunk into a deep sleep, from which he suddenly awoke, shivering, and stiff with cold: he beheld Jacques standing over him.

The spy held high over his head, the flaming stump of a torch, and appeared intent upon examining the features of the sleeper, his dark eyes gleaming with an expression of extraordinary interest in the scrutiny. As St. Marcel leaped to his feet, instinctively catching up his sword, which lay on the ground by the side of the bench, Jacques smiled at the suspicion which had prompted the movement, and making a sign of silence, said, in a low tone of voice:

"I have changed my mind."

"Indeed!" retorted St. Marcel, placing his hand upon the hilt of his sword, as if doubtful of the spy's intentions.

"Yes!" resumed Jacques; "I told thee that I wished to speak with thee, to-morrow: I have changed my mind."

"And was it to tell me so whilst I slept, that thou camest?" demanded our hero, at the same time thrusting his half-drawn sword back into its sheath.

"I came to wake thee," replied the spy; "what I have to tell thee, I will tell thee to-night: to-morrow may not come, for some of us."

St. Marcel felt uneasy at this last remark, but made up his mind that to-morrow should not come for the speaker, if he perceived any symptoms of foul play against himself: as he again addressed his midnight visiter, he clutched his sword more firmly, clinging to the ground with his feet, as though he would fix them there if he could.

"What dost thou mean?" said he; "art thou mocking me? or have I been brought here to die by ruffians' hands? what farce was that, then, in which thou didst play so poor a part to night?"

"Bah!" responded the spy, with a derisive and impatient jerk of the head; "art thou awake, or dreaming, or pot-valiant only? dost thou think I saved thee from the Bastile, to murder thee, here? Bah! I told thee I had something important to communicate, to-morrow, but——"

"To-morrow may not come, for some of us," remarked St. Marcel, meaningly.

"Wilt thou answer for its coming?" asked Jacques; "may we not all die ere another hour has waned? come! banish thy suspicion; it is groundless; and if thou desirest to learn more, follow me, for I have altered my plans, and must be doing, to-morrow. Come! I am thy friend."

As Jacques uttered the last sentence, two large tears rolled down his cheeks; St. Marcel watched them fall, but was at a loss to account for the emotion that had excited them; he could perceive nothing in the spy's discourse, of a nature to cause him to shed a tear, and therefore attributed his perturbation to some reminiscence of some by-gone event that had suddenly intruded itself upon his mind, although he did think singular it should recur under such peculiar circumstances; this silent testimony, however, of what was passing within his breast, partially disarmed his suspicion; in spite of himself, he felt that he must trust him—he could not help it—he was a strange man, no doubt—his companions too, were strange—perhaps some of them were even what he had suspected Jacques to be—but Jacques was no murderer—he could not doubt that—"murderers do not shed tears," thought St. Marcel—but he still hesitated whether to follow him or not.

"Is thy communication," said he, addressing the spy, "of such a nature, that thou canst not impart it to me, here? We are alone!"

Evidently offended at St. Marcel's want of confidence in him, a dark shade overspread Jacques' countenance—the expression was one of wounded pride and sorrow, which, however, he soon subdued; he made no reply, but looking quickly at our hero, raised the blazing stump of the torch so as to cast its light into the niches around the inner hall: it flickered upon groups of figures, lying in different postures, apparently sleeping—some upon pallets, others upon benches, a few upon the bare ground, on which, overcome by their libations, they had evidently taken up their position unconsciously; St. Marcel understood the spy's silent hint, and bowing, indicated by a sign, that he was ready to follow him.

Jacques led the way across the inner hall already mentioned, tread—

ing cautiously, as though not wishful of awaking his companions one or two of whom, as they passed, half raised themselves on their elbows, greeting them with a sleepy nod of recognition; opening a small door on the opposite side, the pair continued their way through a narrow, tortuous passage, arrived at the end of which, Jacques pushed open a second door, and St. Marcel found himself in a kind of cell, about sixteen feet square, the lofty roof arched, and of the same style of architecture as the halls they had just quitted.

In one of the small niches of the cell, only recently appropriated to its present use, the remains of a wood fire still crackled cheerfully; against the wall, over the chimney or projection of modern masonry that served as such, hung a gigantic oil-lamp, shedding only a red, smoky light into the apartment, and glimmering fitfully upon sundry arms, some rusty, some bright and glittering, arranged promiscuously, though not without an eye to effect; in another recess stood an iron-bedstead, the bed, undisturbed and clean; a common oak-table, on which lay a few books—here and there an unwieldly chest, surmounted by three or four smaller ones—two wooden stools, and a large pile of logs in one corner, completed the interior embellishments of the spy's apartment.

"*Now* we are alone," said he, closing the door after them, as they entered; "take a seat," he continued, throwing the remainder of the torch into the embers, together with a log or two of wood; "draw up to the fire; thou art cold."

St. Marcel complied, hesitatingly, his companion seating himself on the opposite side of the low hearth, gazing in silence, but earnestly at him.

"*Now*, we are alone," again exclaimed Jacques.

St. Marcel bowed assent to this self-evident fact, totally at a loss to account for the interest he appeared to take in conning his features.

"I brought thee hither," resumed his host, "lest thy affairs should become as well known to thy Lutetian brethren as they are to me; I have reasons why they should not."

Our hero could not help thinking that his mysterious friend was very considerate, especially as he had no business, unless he dealt with supernaturals, to know any thing at all about *his* private affairs; nor could he comprehend the motive for so much solicitude on this score; when he mentioned the word "affairs," too, he felt uneasy—he did not know wherefore, but the fact was incontrovertible, that he certainly did experience more than a slight degree of discomposure, for he just then remembered that these said "affairs" of his, had for some time past, betrayed decided symptoms of lunacy, and required some extraordinary doctoring to restore them to any condition approaching to sanity; the allusion excited too much surprise to allow him to frame an audible reply, although he mentally echoed the words—"my affairs," interjectionally, as long-forgotten scores of every description, tailors' bills, debts of honour, long sums in compound addition for indefinite benefits received in the shape of board, lodging, and doing for, expired bonds unredeemed, small acknowledgements for property

mortgaged on large interest, inclusive of unpaid epaulets and etcæteras—rose in array against him, compressed into and comprised in that small word "affairs:" oh! what would he not have given to see "settled," miraculously appended thereto!

In the present state of "his affairs," then—the robbery of the Duke and sundry other peccadilloes considered—he did not feel over-anxious to render himself a subject of conversation amongst his brethren, for although it might be Lutetian moral philosophy to owe as much as possible to every-body, and pay as little, and to laugh at creditors to boot, still, this was a point of heroism at which he had not yet arrived, nor could yet desire to attain, having a position to lose, which, according to his own system of reasoning, based upon outward evidences, he fancied that his Lutetian companions had not.

These reflections did not arise, be it said, in the same order as they have been reproduced, nor at such length; on the contrary; they presented themselves all at once, or in such quick succession, as to make themselves felt almost simultaneously; for so rapid is the action of the human mind, that infinitely more may be conceived, and thought, and felt in one second, than can be described in an hour; nor is it practicable—so great is the anomalism of this our nature—to portray within any given number of hours, the aggregate amount of emotion, either pleasurable or disagreeable, which, by the agency of circumstance, is oftentimes compressed into one brief, fleeting, transitory instant of time: therefore, although St. Marcel felt and thought all that has been described—aye, and a great deal more that has not—these thoughts passed through his mind too swiftly for any visible expression as to their precise nature to arise, although he could not repress the slight movement of astonishment which escaped him, when Jacques betrayed so intimate a knowledge of his domestic concerns.

"Friend St. Marcel," resumed the spy, "thou owest three thousand crowns to the community of the Lutetians!"

"Was it to tell me that, thou didst bring me hither?" demanded St. Marcel; "if so—"

"And," continued Jacques, interrupting him, without taking notice of his remark, "twenty thousand more, to a certain notary and usurer of this city, by name—"

"Etienne Quinault," interrupted St. Marcel, in turn; "what of that? has he commissioned thee to recover the debt? The villainous old miser! By right, I owe him scarcely more than half that sum; he claims the remainder as interest."

"Just or unjust," remarked Jacques, "shouldst thou be prepared to liquidate his claim, were he to enforce it within twenty-four hours hence?"

"No!" replied our hero; "why dost thou ask that strange question?"

"Because," retorted the spy, "it is necessary to thy safety, that I should know."

"My safety! thou art deeply interested in it, then," observed his companion.

"I am," responded Jacques, "much; more than I can express, or thou canst conceive:" and he looked at St. Marcel as though he could say a very great deal on the subject, if he liked; whilst the expression of his countenance was so peculiar as he answered the query, that notwithstanding the very equivocal position in which he was placed, our hero began to feel an irresistible interest in his mysterious host, his doubts respecting the probity of whose intentions were fast vanishing before a growing sentiment of confidence.

"Indeed!" ejaculated he, in reply to Jacques' observation; continuing, in a tone that betrayed much anxiety: "may I learn the reason of thy solicitude in my behalf?"

"I have an end to gain," responded the other.

"What dost thou seek?" asked St. Marcel, impatiently.

"Money!" exclaimed Jacques.

"Money!" reiterated his companion; "why, thou knowest that I do not possess even the skeleton of a crown-piece. Money, indeed! By my holy patron! thy wits will be sorely taxed, to coax money out of an empty pocket like mine."

"Yet," observed the spy unmoved, "even *that* were easier than to deliver thee from the Bastile, wert thou once a prisoner there."

"The Bastile, again," cried St. Marcel, turning pale and cold, as the dread name grated on his ear; "have I not consented to pay three thousand crowns as the price of my ransom? what more dost thou require?"

"And didst thou not too, consent and give thy bond to the Sieur Quinault, for the sum of twenty thousand crowns?" asked Jacques.

"True! I did!" replied our hero; "the bond expired three days ago, and is still unpaid: what then? can I not renew it? that as well as others before it?"

"Thou must first evade the officers of the Supreme Court," answered his host: "the Sieur Quinault has obtained summary judgment against thee, and even now, thou art in the power of the law."

This piece of intelligence startled St. Marcel, for although aware that by leaving his bond unredeemed, he had rendered himself amenable to the usual penalties, he had not anticipated so summary a course; inwardly cursing his folly, he gazed at Jacques, as with a bitter smile, he responded:

"Thou seemest well informed, forsooth; and yet, knowing all this, thou askest me for money. I had better have chosen the Bastile than Lutetia; I should at least have saved three thousand crowns."

"Yet," remonstrated the spy, "to a Lutetian, the Sieur Quinault's clerk, thou art indebted for this timely warning; whilst to others of our unknown community was entrusted the execution of the judge's mandate against thee: so fear not; thou art safe from pursuit, and shalt be revenged upon Etienne Quinault."

As Jacques made an end, St. Marcel abruptly rose, his face flushed, his brow contracted, his eyes gleaming with indignation. When

ntroduced to the community of self-styled Lutetians, he had not, in spite of all his efforts, succeeded in divining the mysterious interest which united them, nor their peculiar avocation; Jacques' words, however, suddenly opened his eyes; rapid as the electric spark, the truth darted across his mind; and simultaneous with his perception thereof, was the deep blush of shame that overspread his countenance; nor could he, but by an extreme effort, controul his anger, when he once more addressed his companion:

"Sieur Jacques," said he, looking proudly at that individual; "when thou gavest me to choose between the Bastile and Lutetia, thou didst guarantee that I should not be pledged to dishonour, if I chose Lutetia; I revoke my choice; for the office of a spy ill befits an officer of His Most Christian Majesty:" here he made the military salute, in token of respect, and stood, awaiting Jacques' reply, his lips quivering with suppressed passion.

The latter, however, remained impassible, choking all external evidence of emotion; he paused a few moments, looking fixedly at his guest, to whom, he at length made a sign, expressive of his desire that he should resume his seat, replying with a haughtiness which he strove not to conceal.

"Thou canst *not* revoke; but know, that when Jacques of Beauvais pledges his word, 'tis never pledged to falsehood!"

"Yet," asked St. Marcel, "what is it but dishonour to be leagued with a community of spies—*mouchards.*"

"Call the Lutetians, *mouchards,* if such is thy fancy," replied Jacques hastily; "we will not quarrel about terms; but thou must confess—" here a sarcastic smile played about his mouth—"that a *cut-purse* and a *mouchard,* are very fitting companions."

The sarcasm was too biting, too bitter, too well founded in truth to fall powerless, and St. Marcel sunk into his seat, annihilated with shame—unable to look at his reprover, who watched his changing countenance with a minuteness which convinced our hero that his innermost thoughts were read, although he durst scarcely turn his eyes within upon himself.

He, now for the first time, felt how entirely he had placed himself in the power of the spy; that if he escaped incarceration for the robbery, imprisonment for the debt awaited him, unless he consented to Jacques' conditions of release; nor did he possess a friend who would become bondsman for him, so completely had he exhausted his resources. In vain he strove to crush the feelings of mortification that overwhelmed him, as he thought of the nature of his fellowship with the Lutetians—the sentiment of self-preservation ruled paramount over every other—and failing in an attempt to degrade himself to their level—in spite of Jacques' quiet hint, to the effect that he was not any better than they—he detected himself endeavouring to elevate the community to which he belonged, in the hope of reconciling his mind to the step he had taken in becoming a member thereof.

One consolation remained to him: although pledged to Lutetia

and her sons, he had been forced to make the compact; and whatever the consequences such a compact entailed, he argued, that the coercion would tend to mitigate what he considered to be, only a momentary dereliction, from the path of honour. He determined, notwithstanding, to take advantage of the spy's proffer of services, as of his Lutetian companions', and—since the price of his confraternity with them, was deliverance from the Bastile and from the clutches of his creditor, Etienne Quinault—to secure the golden opportunity, and at least, derive from the association, the advantages which had tempted him to join it.

He perceived that Jacques was no trifler: nor could banish a secret desire to become better acquainted with him; there was in his manner and his speech, something so candid and sincere; he had befriended him, likewise, or expressed an intention of so doing; nay, even given some proofs of his ability to do it: this was one reason the more why he should trust in him; his motives were selfish, no doubt; but so he profited thereby, what did it signify? thus, there now remained for him only to learn at what premium the spy's protection was to be purchased, over and above his (St. Marcel's) association with the Lutetians, and the bonus of three thousand crowns which he had promised to pay to that respectable fraternity.

Jacques himself was perfectly prepared to witness the effect that his sarcasm against St. Marcel had produced, but waited until the emotion of the latter had somewhat subsided, ere he again ventured to address him; this he at length did, saying:

"Come, friend St. Marcel; let us understand each other! Thou hast chosen Lutetia instead of the Bastile; dost thou feel desirous of revenging thyself upon Etienne Quinault? 'Tis easily done," continued he, remarking the expression in St. Marcel's countenance; "what sayest thou, now, to borrowing more of him?"

"If *that* could be done," replied the other with unrestrained glee, "it would be rare vengeance: but how, without compromising myself more?"

"Leave that to me," resumed Jacques; "meanwhile, how dost thou propose to pay the three thousand crowns for which I am thy respondent?"

"I will leave *that* also to thee," retorted St. Marcel, laughing heartily at his own jest at the expense of the spy; "perhaps Etienne Quinault will lend thee *that*!"

"Aye," responded Jacques, nodding his head significantly; "and more to boot."

"More!" ejaculated our hero.

"More!" re-echoed his host; "if *thy* pockets are empty, the coffers of Etienne Quinault are full; thou must lend me thy assistance to diminish their contents."

"*If* I must," observed St. Marcel, "thou must first point out the way. But answer me this. Why hast thou chosen *me*? Couldst thou not find some more fitting agent? Methinks that amongst my brethren of Lutetia, are many who would join thee with better grace."

"Thou art the most fitting agent," responded the spy, "and therefore I have chosen thee: *why* thou art such, is known to myself, and must yet remain a secret to thee. But tell me; at what price dost thou estimate the services which I have this night rendered thee?"

"'Tis my custom," answered our hero, haughtily, "to repay services in kind; but upon thine, thou didst thyself set a price: three thousand crowns to the community, and myself to become a Lutetian. Hast thou already repented of thy bargain. If so, and seekest higher pay for what thou hast done, value thy services thyself."

"I must have one hundred thousand crowns," replied Jacques; "nay! start not! for the money must be forth coming ere to-morrow night."

"One hundred thousand crowns," exclaimed St. Marcel to himself, in a half whisper; "how," continued he, addressing the spy, "is that sum to be procured, unless by——"

"I know thy thoughts," interrupted Jacques; "but fear not; we are neither cut-throats, nor cut-purses. That *thou* hast not the money, is clear; but Etienne Quinault *has;* and since thou canst not give it, *he* must."

"Go to him, then," retorted our hero, impatiently.

"I will," observed the spy; "but not unprepared. I seek not to rob him; only to-borrow of him. Here," continued he; "here is parchment—there pens and ink. Give him bond for one hundred thousand crowns;" and he laid before St. Marcel, a piece of parchment, already engrossed, with spaces in blank, to be filled up according to the usual form.

Our hero perceived that the mysterious individual by his side, had preconcerted his measures, and doubtless possessed some secret power of enforcing compliance with his extraordinary request. D'Argenson's warrant alone was an instrument sufficiently formidable for the purpose, and to escape from the fate it threatened him with, no alternative remained but to acquiesce in the spy's project. He attempted to read the document before him, but could behold inscribed thereon, nothing save "Bastile;" he trembled as he thought of the responsibility he was about to incur, but his thoughts ultimately resolved themselves into the one, tremendous climax, the "Bastile;" seizing the pen, he commenced filling up the bond.

"One hundred thousand crowns," ejaculated he, half aloud; "for one twelvemonth! How can I hope to raise, between to-day and a year hence, a sum sufficient to meet it? Where shall I seek it?"

"At the gambling-table," replied Jacques; "thou mayest perhaps find one of the many patrimonies have been lost there: who knows? Besides; canst thou not hope to win a hundred thousand crowns, with as much certainty as twenty thousand? What other resource had'st thou when thou gavest thy last bond to Etienne Quinault?"

"Thy sarcasm is ill-timed," retorted our hero, "although thy reproof is just. But I see not the use of this bond to thee: thou surely wilt not tender it to the Sieur Quinault as security for the money?"

"If I force him to lend the money upon it, will not that be vengeance for thee, friend St. Marcel?"

"Nay!" interrupted Jacques' astonished companion; "the money is for thy benefit, not mine; the revenge too will be thine, unless thou makest me a partner in the spoil."

"Thirty thousand crowns shall be thy share," quickly retorted Jacques.

"What guarantee wilt thou give me for that?" asked St. Marcel.

"My word," responded Jacques: "I have no other."

"I will take it," observed our hero, "but if I sign this bond I have a right to expect something more than money. Thou must deliver up to me, thy warrant for conveying me to the Bastile. Give me that, and I will do thy bidding."

"I should then hold no guarantee for thy fidelity to Lutetin," remonstrated Jacques; "yet, thou shalt have it, for the warrant is powerless against thee, now thou art one of us: thou shalt have it: but not now."

"And why not, *now*?" exclaimed the other; "since 'tis powerless against me, thou canst have no further use for it; and if I pledge myself to keep the secret of the Lutetians, canst thou not take *my* word, as I have thine?"

"I may have a use for it," resumed the spy; "a future use; let that suffice: but meet me here at midnight, and thou shalt have it, with the thirty thousand crowns. Wilt thou sign the bond, on this condition?"

"I will," replied St. Marcel, and replenishing his pen was about to append his name to the parchment, when Jacques laid a hand upon his arm and arrested its further progress, saying:

"Not St. Marcel—not thine *own* name; some other: *St. Angin* to wit: don't hesitate; it shall never rise in judgment against thee."

More astounded at this proposition than at any that had preceded it, St. Marcel remained irresolute; but matters had attained a crisis, when to recede, appeared to him more dangerous than to progress; besides, under existing circumstances, far from having anything to lose, he had every thing to gain; and however much his nature repudiated the act of appending an assumed name to the bond, he shrunk more from the thought of incarceration in the Bastile, which rose before him in all its horrors; he incurred no actual responsibility, argued he, by complying with the spy's request; no one that *he* knew bore the name of St. Angin, which was, for the purpose required, as good a name as St. Marcel—nay, better, because Jacques liked it better—any thing, in fact, was preferable to the Bastile; he had taken the first step from the strict path of honour—he had robbed—and to cover his crime, durst not shrink from the deeper evils it entailed; the more he reflected, the more glaring did his error appear, and the more did he perceive the policy of securing the spy's protection: rank, position, future prospects—every consideration vanished before his dread of the infamous Bastile—before his fear of being held up to public reprobation, as a common felon—a cut-purse;

a moment more of irresolution, and without making any remark in reply to Jacques' observation, he added, in a bold, firm hand, the name of St. Angin to the document, handing it over to his companion, with the air of a man who knows he has taken a hazardous step, but, at the same time, made up his mind to meet the consequences.

"There!" he exclaimed; "we now understand each other; art thou satisfied?"

Jacques took the parchment, and perused it with care; the inspection appeared satisfactory, for he folded it up, placed it within his vest, and nodding his head approvingly, answered:

"I am! so shalt thou be to-morrow."

"Am I now free to depart hence, Sieur Jacques?" asked St. Marcel.

"Thou art," was the brief reply; "or, to remain, if it suit thee better."

"What is the time of day?" again asked our hero.

"It wants two hours of day-break."

"Then I will go, Sieur Jacques. But how shall I obtain admission here to night?"

"The pass-word," answered the spy, "will be *Julian*; come not to the door by which thou didst first enter; go to the cabaret in the Rue des Mathurins, kept by Maitre Chopin; he is one of us."

"He keeps the *Cep-de-Vigne?*" observed St. Marcel, inquiringly.

"The same," responded Jacques; "he will conduct thee hither."

"Good!" exclaimed our hero; "and now Sieur Jacques, adieu!"

"The same to thee, friend St. Marcel; remember! at twelve to-night. Let me lead the way."

St. Marcel bowed, and allowed Jacques to precede him. For some time, they proceeded through long, cold passages, narrow and winding; so dark, that our hero—whose only guide was the echo of the spy's footsteps—often found himself compelled to feel his way; the walls were slimy and fungous; the damp hung about, and depended from the roof, in long watery cob-webs, which flapped him in the face, entangling themselves in his hair, and covering his garments. At length his conductor stopped; St. Marcel heard the noise of a key turning in a rusty lock, immediately succeeded by the grating of a door upon its hinges.

"'Ware the door!" cried Jacques.

The caution came in time to enable St. Marcel to avoid the obstacle; they ascended a short flight of stone steps; then came another series of passages; more steps; another door; they were in the street—near the Seine.

It was still dark, but the transition from total gloom was not without producing its effect upon the eyesight of our hero. At another time, he could scarcely have distinguished the spot—but every house now stood out to his view, as though it were broad day; there was the Seine—yonder, the Pont-Neuf—beyond it, the Louvre, the Thuileries—over against him to his right, the Palais de Justice—the Pont St. Michel—a bit of the towers of Notre Dame—he surely could

not be mistaken—he must oe in the Rue des Vieux Augustins — ne was too—but how came he in it? that he could not tell; he only knew that he *was* in it, and that Jacques stood beside him.

"I know what thou wouldst say," remarked the spy, apparently enjoying St. Marcel's astonishment; "and did Monsieur d'Argenson know as much as thou, he would, like thyself, seek to learn more. Go thy ways, friend, and meet me to-night as we have agreed: adieu!"

Waving his hand, Jacques was about to depart, when his companion suddenly grasped him by the arm. Until then, the latter had forgotten the melancholy event which had led to his induction into the community of the Lutetians, for the later occurrences had succeeded one another so rapidly—were of so extraordinary a character—and had left so vivid an impression, that, coupled with the mode of his dismissal from the subterranean palace of the Roman Emperors, his senses had, up to that moment been bewildered; his vicinity, however, to the scene of his late exploit, all at once brought back the remembrance of the unfortunate whom he had saved, nor was it without a slight twinge of conscience that he addressed himself to the spy, in order to gain some information respecting her present condition.

"Stay a moment," said he; "canst thou give me any tidings of that young girl—"

He was interrupted by Jacques, who replied:

"She lives! thanks to thy courage! Know that thou hast saved *two* lives instead of one;" and gently disengaging himself from the hand that withheld him, he stalked away, leaving St. Marcel half puzzled to comprehend his meaning.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF D'ARGENSON'S INTERVIEW WITH MAITRE ETIENNE QUINAULT, THE NOTARY; AND HOW JACQUES GOT THE MONEY FROM THE LATTER.

Towards noon, on the same day that St. Marcel quitted the Palais des Thermes, a man might have been seen wending his way amongst the sinuous streets of the Marais, taking the direction of the Rue Vieille du Temple.

It was a gloomy morning; the north-east wind blew cold and

fierce; but it was neither colder nor fiercer than that man's heart, nor half so withering as the thoughts that troubled it. Wrapped up in a thick military cloak—his three-cornered hat jammed down over his brows—he strode along, plunged in evil reflections; now and then knocking away with his cane, the pebbles in his path, or striking the dogs that obstructed it, laughing to himself as they scampered howling away. Apparently, he was agitated, for his gait was irregular; now slow, now quick; now he stopped short; then darted off swifter than before; his sallow face, too, alternately flushed and grew pale; his thin, compressed lips trembled, as he muttered to himself, a few indistinct sentences; and his eyes gleamed evilly, wandering restlessly around, glancing at every body, and at every thing, but resting upon nothing; little children left off play as he went by, and shrinking from his gaze, ran away; old women crossed themselves as he passed; every one made way for him, and looked round after him as he receded from them: he came to the street he wanted, and passed the house he sought; but he did not know it—and turned down another street—and another—and another—and kept on taking wrong turnings and by-streets, until he came to the Boulevard St. Antoine, at the corner of which, and the street he had just come out of, stood a knot of persons looking at something—he looked too, and saw the Bastile; then he smiled, for the sight of it gave him pleasure; there hung a very large black cloud immediately above it; the cloud was the blackest in the sky—although there were many others, black enough, scudding through it—and seemed to have fallen, gradually, from heaven, to alight over that spot: there it hung, growing blacker, and blacker, and blacker; every moment sinking lower: the wind scattered the other clouds, far and wide, but vented its fury in vain upon that monstrous, fungus-shaped lump of darkness—there it hung still—rapidly increasing in bulk—until it completely covered the building; then its sides began to whirl over and under, under and over, like wreaths of thick smoke: the man saw *that*, and laughed outright, although he stood the centre of the little cluster already mentioned: one of these was a shop-keeper; his wife—a meek young woman, with a smiling face—and holding a baby in her arms—had sidled up to him, and, like her neighbours, looked, in silence, at that black cloud; she heard the man, and shuddered; so did the neighbours, and wondered why he laughed so: he could not have told them, had they asked; and they felt no inclination to do that, for there was nothing mirthful in his laugh; far from it; but something savage, spiteful, unearthly, maniacal, devilish; something between a growl and a chuckle, with a dash of pain intermingled; as though he must laugh, and yet did not want to—or as if he felt that he ought not to laugh, but would in spite of himself, and of every thing else: and laugh he did, although those that stood by him, looked grave, and pointed to the black cloud; whilst some shook their heads, and one or two crossed themselves. Presently, the huge mass opened, bursting downwards and sideways, as though forced apart by some crushing weight; a stream of

fire, white and blinding, darted from the opening, and fell hissing upon the towers beneath; with it—even whilst it descended—came a terrific crash—no echo followed—it fell all at once on the ear—dead, ponderous, distinct: no other noise could have resembled that crash, unless, indeed, the foundations of the entire building had given way, and the edifice itself suddenly fallen down, all of a heap; *that* would have been something like it; but not half so awful. Still, the cloud remained, and so did the little knot of persons that were looking at it.

"'T is a judgment on the wicked old place," said the shop-keeper to his affrighted partner; "if it were burnt, or rased to the ground, Paris would'nt lose much: curse it."

The strange man looked at the speaker, and chuckled again, and again the neighbours looked at him, astonished; they began to think him out of his mind.

"I don't see there's much to laugh at, friend," said the shop-keeper, angrily eyeing the man; "thou deservest to be sent there for thy pains."

"Perhaps he's been there," observed another; "and has come to tell us how he likes it!"

Still the man said nothing; he only scowled at the speakers, from beneath his hat, and hung his head down lower, as if to avoid recognition.

"'T is a pity that all who belong to and have to do with it," once more remarked the shop-keeper, "are not sent there to starve in company."

He would have added something more, but his wife pulled him by the arm, for she caught the eye of the strange man upon her husband; at the same moment too, a neighbour came up and whispered something in his ear, at which he changed colour, but instantly recovering himself, exclaimed:

"Ah! bah! what of it? No harm can come to me for expressing an opinion. God save His Majesty! He doesn't know half that's done in Paris."

"*Jean-Baptiste Poisson!*" slowly ejaculated a voice in the midst of the group; the name was pronounced in a low tone, as if the speaker were committing it to memory, and had, involuntarily, spoken aloud; the shop-keeper started—for it was his name—looking inquiringly at his neighbours to learn who called; they, too, stared at one another, for none of them had mentioned it, and yet, each could have sworn that the other had said in his ear; "Jean-Baptiste Poisson."

The strange man had not moved, but stood looking at the Bastile as before; he read their thoughts, and pushed aside one or two of the group in order to clear a passage for himself; they saw his face—a whisper went round—he was recognised; for his was a face, which once seen, could not be mistaken: still the man took no notice, but resumed his walk towards the Bastile, no one attempting to stop or to speak to him. The nearer he approached the sombre building, and the more its grim proportions became distinct, the better pleased he seemed to be; at last he came up to it, when he smiled, and nodded

his head, as if he recognised some old and valued friend; he stopped short in his walk, to look at it, scanned the height of the walls, and chuckled again as he thought of their thickness, of the thicker ones which they encompassed, and of the broad ditch between them: he reached the outer gate; the guard was being relieved; when the officer saw him, he saluted him, and the sentry presented arms.

"Where did the lightning fall?" said he to the officer.

"On the platform, Monseigneur," answered the latter: "over the Tour de la Liberté." *

"*Tonnerre dieu!*" exclaimed the other, half alarmed for the safety of the towers; "did it do any damage?"

"Little or none to the building, Monseigneur," replied the officer; "but it killed the sentinel on duty."

"Oh! is that all? good!" ejaculated D'Argenson—who has doubtless already been recognised as the man in the cloak—and turning abruptly on his heel, proceeded down the Rue St. Antoine.

Once more he reached the Rue Vieille du Temple, but this time seemed to know where he was, for he examined the houses as he went along, till he stopped at a dirty-looking, old fashioned door, opening into a great court-yard, at the bottom of which was a flight of stone-steps, leading up to an old wooden porch, all worm-eaten, and blistered.

"Maitre Quinault!" growled he, scowling at the old porter as he passed by his lodge; "I suppose he's at home."

"He never goes out—at least by day," replied the porter, sharply; at the same time eyeing the Lieutenant of Police from top to toe: "up two pair; and the sooner the devil gets the brace of you," he continued in an under-tone, "the sooner he'll have his due."

D'Argenson crossed the court-yard, and mounted to the second story; there was no mistaking the door, for, "*Etude. Quinault, Notaire Public:*" painted in large black letters, stared him in the face.

The house in which this worthy public functionary dwelt, was a very large house—six stories high—but although his own, he occupied only a very small portion of it; namely, half of the second floor; three moderate-sized rooms leading one into the other, comprising his dwelling, one being set apart as an office, or *étude*.

It was a dirty hole of a place; filthy outside; filthier within; but just such a hole as one might suppose such a man as the miserly notary would like to inhabit; dark, naked, miserable; and with so thick an atmosphere, it seemed enveloped in an everlasting fog: he kept no servant, and only one clerk. Sometimes, but very seldom, the old porteress got a twenty-sous piece for sweeping out the *étude*, but generally speaking, Maitre Quinault performed such-like little domestic duties, and eat, slept, drank, and lived by himself.

* In December 1699, a thunderbolt fell upon the Bastile; the electric fluid killed the sentinel on the platform, fused the metal of one of the great guns, and finally descended into the ditch, displacing on its way, some of the masonry of the Tour de la Liberté. (*Vide* "*Anecdotes sur la Bastille.*").

There was in that little, dirty office of his, ranged upon sundry rows of shelves, a vast assortment of boxes, all lettered alphabetically, from A to Z, and labelled with dates more than half a century old; there were cup-boards also, tall, narrow cup-boards—reaching from the ceiling to the floor—full of pigeon-holes, crowded with old parchments and dusty papers tied round in bundles, with red tapes, and black tapes, and blue tapes; and some not tied at all, but lying about loose and scattered in drawers that stood half open: two three-legged wooden stools—one for the notary, the other for his clerk—stood on each side of the desk, and in the middle, near the chimney, a chair for visiters: the fire-place was very large, but the fire very small; there was only one window, but that was well barred and cross-barred with iron, outside and in: the doors were double, and the inner one, remarkably thick and strong: a cord with a hart's foot at the end of it, hung at the outer one, and underneath it were painted four cabalistic letters, "S. S. V. P." being a polite invitation—optional on the part of visiters to obey—to the effect that they were to "ring if they pleased."

D'Argenson did not please: he turned the handle of the door, and pushing it open, walked in without ceremony, greatly to the astonishment of the notary, who was alone, and unprepared for so abrupt an entry.

Maitre Etienne Quinault was a little, mean-looking, meagre, sallow-visaged man, now on the verge of three-score, and had looked as old, when only thirty-five; his features were sharp and prominent; his nose bony; his brows angular and knotty: a few grey hairs were scattered about his temples and around the back of his head, whilst his long eye-brows bristled out over his deep-set eyes, like so many crooked wires; his mouth was always pursed up, having been twitched on one side by an early paralytic affection; but his hands! oh! those hands! they were long, bony, and dry—with the skin all shrivelled up; they looked like spiders' claws; the nerves and veins like so many whipcords: he was altogether so meagre, so yellow, so withered, one might have supposed that he had, all his life, lived upon nothing but dusty deeds and parchments.

A stranger, meeting Maitre Quinault in the street, hobbling along at night-fall, would have given him a couple of sous, and thought he had done an act of charity; he looked so abject, so poverty-stricken: and had Maitre Quinault met with so charitable a stranger, he would have laughed in his sleeve, pocketed the donation, and humbly thanked the donor; but his neighbours knew him better; for if any of them wanted money and could give security for it, the old notary was the very man to lend it: no matter the sum, he always had it at command: but for all that, he always denied being rich, and when he lent money to others, always had to borrow it from somebody else—some friend of his, whom nobody knew, nor ever saw: that he was as poor as he gave out, no one believed, for not only was his connection very extensive, but he was known to do more business as a money-lender than as a notary; besides this, he had been established thirty years—had always lived alone—never kept company—

made no show—thus the neighbours had arrived at the very natural conclusion, that Maitre Quinault was—in spite of every thing he said to the contrary—one of the richest, if not *the* richest man of the Quartier du Marais.

When the Lieutenant of Police entered, the notary turned yellower than usual, and started from his seat; he was poring over a bundle of dirty parchments, had a greasy, black silk skull-cap upon his head, and was encased in an old, dirty morning-gown; he recognized his visiter, and advanced a step or two to meet him.

"No ceremony with me, Maitre Quinault," said the latter; "thou can'st see I make none with thee."

"This visit, Monseigneur," replied the notary, "is as unexpected as unusual; it does me very great honour; I am delighted to receive you." If he was, he did not look so.

"No doubt! no doubt!" retorted the other, seating himself opposite to the notary; "thou hast often come to *me*, but, 'tis a long time since I paid *thee* a visit: the old place looks the same as ever; a trifle more dusty perhaps;" and the visiter looked up at the cob-webs that depended from the ceiling and filled up the corners.

"'Tis—let me see," observed Maitre Quinault, musingly; "ah! 'tis nearly five and twenty years ago, since Monseigneur honoured me so; time passes very rapidly—very."

"I believe it *was* about five and twenty years ago that I came to thee, here," responded D'Argenson, gloomily: "dost thou remember under what circumstances?"

"Perfectly, Monseigneur," answered the notary, trembling violently; "my prosperity dates from that period."

"We both have prospered since then, Maitre Quinault: more than we deserve, *tonnerre dieu!* had we been honester men, we might have been hanged long ago!"

"Monseigneur does not give himself his due," remonstrated the notary: "his elevation is owing to his own merit—"

"Bah! no compliments," interrupted D'Argenson; "I know what I am; and thou knowest thyself, too; but hast not courage to avow it; shall I tell thee Maitre Quinault?"

"Monseigneur is in a railing mood," responded the latter; "the portrait of either of us, would not be flattering, if painted in its true colours!"

"Spoken more like yourself, Maitre Quinault; I hate the man who plays the rogue, and knowing that he *is* one, fears to own it to himself: 'tis only a word after all; and so that he conceal the truth from every body *save* himself, what signifies the name by which a man chooses to call himself? You notaries, live by roguery, and therefore should entertain a good opinion of a rogue: ergo, *Maitre Quinault, think well of thyself!*"

"I have ever entertained a great opinion of Monseigneur," retorted the notary with an ironical distortion of his countenance, which he could not, in spite of all his efforts, writhe into a smile; "he was always my superior."

The gloomy Lieutenant of Police laughed outright at Maitre Quinault's sally, but although he laughed so, not a muscle of his face moved, it made the notary shudder to hear him, who, to conceal his tremor, stooped down, and raked together the ember of the scanty fire, wondering what his visiter would say next.

"I knew we understood each other," observed he at last, with peculiar emphasis; "we are old acquaintances enough for that: thirty years, Maitre Quinault; thirty years! 'twas I made thee rich; 'twas I made thee what thou art: thou owest every thing to me: wealth, position, life—"

The notary turned yellower still—his knees smote together—his jaw dropped—he remained nailed to his seat, staring wildly at his tormentor, who appeared to take a savage pleasure in increasing his embarrassment.

"Ah!" continued the Lieutenant of Police: "it was a black affair enough, that first of thine; but thy second was worse; very fortunate thou wert in having a friend at court; convenient place the Bastile, for a dangerous witness; is it not, Maitre Quinault? 'tis a long while since, but I dare say he would know thee, even now."

"Does he still live, then, Monseigneur?" enquired the trembling notary; "has not five and twenty years' confinement killed him? oh! horrid! horrid!" here the wretched man buried his face in his hands, his breast heaving convulsively.

"Well, well," observed D'Argenson, derisively; "since thou dost so commiserate him, thou can'st take his place if thou wilt; or, thou art not too old to hang: the hand of Monsieur de Paris,* is well in; I find him plenty of work."

"No! no! no!" ejaculated the other; "I have endured the tortures of remorse, *so* many years—I can endure them longer—let me die in my bed—not on the gibbet—not in the Bastile—I cannot live many years more—let me not die before my time."

The anguish of the hoary culprit became positively appalling; the cold sweat stood out in large drops, from every pore; his teeth chattered; his long bony fingers clutched the sides of his seat, and his whole frame shook: any other but D'Argenson would have shrunk from the sight; but *he* did not: he still looked at him, in silence, and unmoved; inwardly chuckling at his hideous contortions.

"Why? Monseigneur;" gasped the notary: "why, for the first time since it occurred, do you now revert to that horrid transaction? Have you another deed like it to propose? oh! oh!"

"Did I tell thee to forge thy dying master's will?" asked D'Argenson, sneeringly; "perhaps I did; I think I did: I think I can *remember* telling thee to do that—"

"No! not that, Monseigneur; but the other—the other—yes! that was done for you—"

"For me! I a provoker to murder! calumny! calumny, Maitre Quinault: rank calumny; *mort dieu*!"

* The hangman of Paris went by this name.

"But your letter Monseigneur—"

"My letter! ah! ah! True I expressed a wish that he might die suddenly, but was that telling thee to——to murder him; that's an ugly word, Maitre Quinault; and an uglier deed!"

"The deed was your's, Monseigneur! 'twas done at your instigation: 'twas done for you! by heaven it was!"

"'T was done by thee, say, to secure my favor; *sang dieu!* because I saved thy neck, five years before: ah! ah! thou thoughtest to put mine in the same noose; a convenient place, the Bastile, for a dangerous witness; is it not Sieur Quinault? ah! ah!"

A short pause succeeded, which was interrupted by the notary.

"No more, Monseigneur; no more on this subject: yet, I repeat, that deed was done to serve your interests: had I secured his papers, our position now might have differed."

"Well, well, Maitre Quinault! 'twas not thy fault that he brought only the copies of the deeds with him: he was too cunning for us there. Thou hast them still in thy possession?"

"They are safe, Monseigneur. I have not touched them since."

"Good, good!" replied the Lieutenant of Police, rubbing his hands: he then drew close up to the notary, and leaning forwards, looked hard at him for a few moments, when he again broke silence:

"That name was well written at the foot of thy master's will, Maitre Quinault, and might have passed as his own hand-writing, had I alone not known better: but I kept thy secret, and saved thy neck, Maitre Quinault."

"'Twas a service I never forgot, Monseigneur."

"Nor I, *mort dieu!* it served to bind thee to my interests, and thou hast ever since remained a willing instrument in my hands. Nay! don't tremble, I scruple not to give thee thy due, nor to own my obligations: why should'st thou tremble to hear truth from my lips?"

"It comes so seldom," retorted the notary with a bitter smile, and always inopportunely."

"Good, good!" ejaculated D'Argenson, "but like thyself: bitter—bitter; ah! ah! I am glad thou art growing less gloomy."

"Speak, Monseigneur, speak;" said the other, hurriedly, and gasping painfully: "what have you now in hand?"

"I was observing," resumed the Lieutenant of Police, without appearing to notice the notary's agony, "that the signature at the foot of thy old master's will, was perfect—perfect!"

"Well, Monseigneur?"

"Well! Maitre Quinault! one name is as easy to sign as another; look! 'tis easily done;" here he exhibited an engrossed document which he placed into the notary's hands, continuing; "dost thou comprehend me?"

"I do, Monseigneur! But the real will—"

"I knew we understood each other," exclaimed D'Argenson, interrupting his companion: "thou wilt then do me this little favour, eh? thy reward shall be ample."

"Monseigneur! I am rich already; what will money avail

me? And what do you ask me to do, Monseigneur? To forge a murdered man's signature! take all I possess, but leave me innocent of this crime—I dare not do it."

"'Tis not money I will offer thee," continued D'Argenson, heedless of the notary's appeal; "but the post of first Judge of the Cour Royale of the Seine, now vacant—'tis an appointment which I can command for thee. It will, at any rate be better than the Bastile; eh, Maitre Quinault?"

The latter paused awhile ere he replied; he knew the character of the man he had to deal with, and that his life was at his mercy; but a new sentiment had suddenly been awakened in his breast—a sentiment more potent in its effects than the pangs of remorse—it was ambition—to which he had early sacrificed his probity; and though avarice had since disputed the palm with this dormant passion, and for many years ruled paramount over his heart, now that he saw an opportunity of gratifying it, beyond his hopes, and of rendering it the means of adding to his stores of ill-gotten wealth, it once more assumed its empire, and to it he again sacrificed his new-born repentance.

"I consent, Monseigneur," said he, his eyes glistening at the bright prospect so unexpectedly opened before him; "when shall I enter upon the duties of my new office?"

"I will this very day procure the Minister's assent to thy nomination," replied D'Argenson; "within a week, at latest, expect the official letter from the Interior: let the document before thee, be ready by then."

"Your commands shall be obeyed, Monseigneur."

"And now of the Baron de St. Auney," continued the Lieutenant of Police; "remember my instructions to thee yesterday; not an hour's grace—not a moment's respite."

"But, Monseigneur," said the notary, interrupting his visiter; "this course is most unusual: the time allowed him by the Supreme Court, has not yet expired: it yet wants three whole weeks of the term."

"*I* am the Supreme Court, Sieur Quinault: I command it: the judges are my tools, as well as thou: ah! ah! ah! they have rescinded their first decision, and abridged the remainder of the term, to three days: this morning he will receive their notification to that effect."

"He will not be prepared to pay the sum, at so short a notice, Monseigneur."

"I know it, Sieur Quinault; I know it: I expect it: I don't want him to be prepared, *tonnerre dieu!* not a moment's grace must thou grant him, though he should even offer thee a part of the sum!"

"'Tis well!" replied the notary; "I will prepare the writ for his arrest. Is not that what you desire, Monseigneur?"

D'Argenson nodded his head, approvingly; his companion again broke silence:

"May I ask," said he, "why Monseigneur has decided upon pursuing so unusual a course?"

"Why?" retorted the other, frowning hideously; "that brat is alive —dost thou hear that, Maitre Quinault? the brat is alive I say: should the Baron by any chance discover him, my plans would be frustrated: dost thou comprehend?"

"It is Monseigneur's aim that he should not have that chance; I comprehend perfectly: 'tis a most politic step. But, the—the—

"The brat?" asked the Lieutenant of Police.

"Exactly, Monseigneur; do you know where he is to be found?"

"*Sang dieu!* no! he is in Paris; that much I know, and it shall go hard but I discover him."

"What then?" inquired the notary.

"What! why the Bastile, Maitre Quinault: there he shall rot—rot—ah! ah! ah! His father and I were rivals in love—he was favoured—I was hated: but I had revenge; and will have more; more revenge still; his brat shall starve in the dungeons of the Bastile; he shall rot there—he shall! and *his* fate shall be thine, Maitre Quinault, if my commands are not obeyed; so beware."

Whilst he spoke, D'Argenson's face became livid with passion; he had risen from his seat to clutch the notary by the arm, who stood, appalled at the demoniac expression of his countenance, and writhing with pain, though unable to release himself from the grasp of the Lieutenant's iron fingers; at length the latter quitted his hold, and pointing to the table, on which Maitre Quinault had thrown the document in question, nodded significantly at him, and laying his hand on the handle of the door, added:

"A good morning to thee, Maitre Quinault; remember!" another moment, and his heavy footsteps resounded down the old stairs.

As soon as he was fairly gone, and the notary had, in a measure, recovered from the trepidation which the late scene had excited, he proceeded to fulfil the conditions of his infamous bargain with the Lieutenant of Police.

Opening one of the secret drawers of his bureau, he selected a bundle of papers therefrom, having perused which, as also the parchment that was to be signed, he reseated himself, and commenced a series of experiments in penmanship, in order to perfect himself in counterfeiting the signature of the deceased individual.

Now, generally speaking, Maitre Quinault's hand was steady: remarkably so, for an old man's; but contrary to custom, it suddenly began to shake in such a manner, that he could scarcely hold the pen: he attempted over and over again, to write the name, but every time he did it, his hand trembled more violently than before; it appeared striken with palsy all at once; he then tried his own name—he thought that might bring him more into the way of it—QUINAULT—there it was, distinct and bold enough—more like print than writing—not a line out of proportion—up-strokes clear—down-strokes ditto—capital-letters, perfect: he attempted the other name again; same result; he could *not* get over the first letter: he kept looking across his shoulder too—just as though he fancied somebody was watching him: he had never felt so uncomfortable, since the

night he first essayed to counterfeit his master's signature—the night that the latter lay speechless—dying—in the adjoining chamber—after telling his clerk, young Etienne Quinault, that he had bequeathed him a thousand crowns, and the remainder of his property, together with his charge of public notary, to an indigent relative of his own, who was following the same avocation unsuccessfully, for want of capital. Yes! his hand trembled then—but he conquered the feeling—and by the time the breath had left his master's body, had succeeded in imitating his signature with the greatest nicety—had appended it too to another will that he himself drew up, and which was precisely the same in purport as the real one, only that it bequeathed the thousand crowns to the indigent relative, and the remainder of the property, with the charge, to his "*young and much esteemed clerk, Etienne Quinault, as a recompense for his assiduity and attention to business.*" Maitre Quinault thought of all this, and of the large fire he made up, in that very hearth, to burn the original will—and looked over his shoulder a great many times, but still kept on trying his skill at the name; at last he hit it: not a shadow of difference: he held his hand, with the pen in it—up to the light: it did not shake—he listened—looked over his shoulder again—again at the dead man's signature, and in less than a minute a fac-simile of it appeared at the foot of the parchment before him: he compared the two: one was not to be distinguished from the other: he was in ecstacies: that dash of ink had elevated him to the rank of first Judge of the Cour Royale! Oh, righteous judge! He burnt the pen that wrote the name, and laughed and rubbed his hands with glee, to see it crisp up in the fire: again he looked at the signature, then began whistling a tune; and whilst he whistled, read the documents before him: he must have been very deeply interested in the perusal, for he did not hear the door open, nor the footsteps of the man, whose eyes met his, when he looked up after completing his labours.

"What's the matter?" said the intruder abruptly; "what makes thee stare at me in that manner? I'm not a ghost!"

"Where—where didst thou come from? how camest thou here?" gasped the notary; trembling, and gazing wildly at the new-comer.

"I came from the street, and through the door," retorted the other; "dost think I could come through the key-hole? Why dost thou shrink from me! I'm flesh and blood like thyself!" so saying, the visiter bounded to the side of Etienne Quinault, and taking him by the collar, shook him rudely for the space of half a minute, when he loosed him, observing:

"Art thou satisfied? Come! I have no time to lose: to business!"

"What *is* thy business?" asked the notary, slowly recovering from his terror, though the restorative had nearly driven the breath out of his body.

"Why! I am poor—thou art rich; and I am come to borrow money from thee."

"I, rich!" screamed Quinault; "I am poor as thyself! I have no money to lend, friend—go!"

"I shall not," retorted the intruder. "See! I can give thee security for the loan."

"Ah! let me look, let me look," quickly responded the notary; "what sum?"

"A trifle! only a hundred thousand crowns!" answered Jacques.

This announcement was received with a yell of astonishment, which, however, produced no effect upon the spy, who maintained his coolness, and his position near the table of the legal official.

"A hundred thousand crowns!" exclaimed the latter; "thou art mad! go! go away, man; thou art mad: mad! stark mad! A hundred thousand crowns! where am I to get such a sum?"

"From yon inner room, to be sure!" replied Jacques; "if thou keepest thy money in a chest, thou must go to a chest for it."

A long pause followed, for, as Jacques spoke, the countenance and manner of the notary underwent a sudden change; he gasped for breath—clutched the desk—staring, apparently horror-stricken at the speaker, and cowering beneath his gaze; his feet remained fixed to the floor, without his possessing power to break the spell that seemed, all at once, cast over him. The spy could not but perceive the alteration that had taken place, and eyed him in silence, whilst the notary, covering his face with his hands, appeared striving to obliterate from his view, the traces of some unwelcome vision. He had seen those lineaments, often before; for five and twenty years they had constantly been present to his imagination: by night—by day—sleeping—waking—at home—abroad—alone, in his chamber, or jostling his way through the crowded streets, they had pursued him everywhere—fitting themselves to strange mens' faces, and yet remaining the same: again he stared at Jacques, making a sign that he should keep off, and sunk into his seat, sobbing convulsively: still Jacques spoke not. At length, the old man looked up once more: he knew it was all fancy; that he was betraying himself to a stranger; yet could not suppress the thoughts that agitated his breast: with a violent effort, he broke silence, saying, in a hollow voice:

"Man, who are you?"

"My name is Jacques," replied that individual: "*you* don't know me, but Monsieur D'Argenson does. I am in his service. Why! one would think I was a ghost to see you stutter, and tremble, and gape, in that way! Get up! I want that money."

The spell was broken; the notary was himself once more: he arose, wiping the streams of perspiration from his brows and head, and resumed the colloquy:

"Excuse this agitation, Sieur Jacques—but I am old, and subject to—to—"

"Qualms of conscience," said the latter, interrupting him; "that's not my business. Quick! give me the sum I want!"

Maitre Quinault perceived the uselessness of disguising the truth from the spy, who was peremptory, and apparently well acquainted with his habits.

"You spoke of security," observed he tremulously: "of what kind?"

"This is it," answered Jacques, tendering the bond he had obtained from St. Marcel.

Etienne Quinault perused it attentively, but started when he came to the name appended at the foot thereof; of all others, it was the last he expected to find there, though the very one he could most have wished for; he glanced, alternately at the name and at the spy, hesitating to reply; at last he said, looking intently at the latter:

"The name is good: but where shall I find this Sieur St. Angin?"

Jacques was, in turn astonished; he had not anticipated such ready acquiescence; but, controlling his feelings, answered, evasively:

"I am only commissioned to receive the amount; since thou findest the security good, give me the money."

"I cannot on such conditions," responded Maitre Quinault; "nay, I will not!"

The spy was not unprepared for this refusal; indeed, in the anticipation of it, he had retained the *lettre-de-cachet*, which, as will be remembered, had produced such an effect upon St. Marcel; coolly withdrawing it from his vest, he exhibited it to the astounded notary, saying:

"Then thou shalt come with me to the Bastile. Read that, Maitre Quinault."

The latter considered awhile, when, recovering his self-possession, he replied, with a sarcastic laugh:

"*Find the man*—aye! but *I* am *not the man*, Sieur Jacques."

"Tell that to St. Marc," retorted the other, derisively; "perhaps he will believe thee! I will at any rate, at once apprehend thee on suspicion! ah! ah! ah! 'tis thou wilt be the victim of the mistake; not I. The Governor has his orders, and this warrant will exonerate *me*: so, choose!"

Again the notary's frame became convulsed: he felt the truth of the spy's observation, who appeared determined to take immediate advantage of the power with which the possession of the blank *lettre-de-cachet* invested him: it was no consolation to know that he would be released when the trick should be discovered; a long time might elapse ere so desirable an event took place, and he felt no inclination to endure an indefinite period of imprisonment in the Bastile—a fate, with which, not an hour ago, he had been indirectly threatened, under circumstances equally embarrassing. No alternative remained, save to accede to the spy's demand; even had he refused the proffered security, the *lettre-de-cachet* was evidently intended to be employed as an instrument of coercion, against the immediate execution of which, there was no appeal; but, he had expressed himself satisfied with the security, and the spy's menace had effectually set aside the only objection he had himself raised, against advancing the sum demanded.

Perceiving the effect his threat had created, Jacques again addressed him:

"I have no time to lose, Sieur Notaire," said he; "is thy choice made?"

"Thou shalt have the money; thou shalt have the money," hurriedly responded Maitre Quinault; "I dare not refuse thee: stay thou here, whilst I fetch it."

The old man tottered into the adjoining apartment, leaving Jacques standing by the table. The latter had not recovered from his surprise at the notary's ready acceptance of the bond, and in vain attempted to fathom the secret: suddenly, his eye fell upon the paper to which Maitre Quinault had appended the forged signature; he turned deadly pale, as he ran over its contents; a glimpse of the truth flashed upon him; his rage knew no bounds; but, with much difficulty, he suppressed it, and ere the old man returned, the cloud had passed away from his brow.

The latter had now made some five or six journies, each time returning loaded with two well filled bags, which he placed on the table; his face had become livid and distorted with the efforts he made to control his grief at parting with so much of his wealth.

"Thirty thousand crowns," said he; "all in gold; good gold; oh! when shall I ever see it again!" and he sobbed aloud, whilst three or four big tears fell scalding hot upon his cheek.

"No whining," said the spy; "it ought to be a relief to thy conscience to get rid of it."

The old man again stared vacantly at the speaker, and made another journey.

"Forty thousand!" said he, placing two more bags near the others.

"Stop!" suddenly exclaimed the spy; "I would save thee from farther trouble, Maitre Quinault!" The latter looked inquiringly at Jacques, who continued: "thou hast a claim against the Baron de St. Auney for sixty-five thousand crowns. Nay! don't start, but listen to me. Thou must give me a quittance, in full, for the amount of his debt to Monseigneur D'Argenson, and I will in exchange give thee this bond, and take the balance."

The notary was mute; D'Argenson's injunctions and threats recurred to him; but remonstrance, he knew, would be uselessly opposed to the determination of Jacques, who, doubtless, was equally prepared to enforce compliance with this, as with his former request: he, therefore, determined to obey him, but inwardly resolved immediately to lay the whole transaction before the Lieutenant of Police, hoping not only to recover his money from the spy, as also the acquittance he demanded, on the part of the baron, but still to retain possession of the Sieur St. Angin's bond. But the alacrity he manifested, excited Jacques' suspicion, who, whilst the notary completed the receipt, stood pondering on the means of baffling any treachery on his part.

"There, then, Sieur Jacques," said Maitre Quinault; "there are the baron's bonds, and there is his acquittance in full: give me the Sieur St. Angin's security."

The spy examined the papers, very minutely, and finding them correct, placed them in his bosom: he then withdrew, from beneath his cloak, a large bag, in which he deposited the notary's gold, casting

the ponderous mass across his shoulder, with the greatest ease and non-chalance.

"There is the bond," exclaimed he, placing it upon the table before Maitre Quinault: "art thou satisfied?"

"I am," was the brief reply, as the speaker perused the precious parchment.

"And so am I, Sieur Quinault! and safe!" ejaculated Jacques snatching up the document to which the notary had attached the forged name, ere that functionary could prevent the act. "Breathe but my name, and—" here he shook the paper triumphantly—"there shall be hanging at the Grève." So saying, he gained the door and disappeared, leaving the terror-stricken Etienne Quinault too agitated to make any effort to stop him.

"Ruined! robbed!" exclaimed he, gasping for breath; and covering his face with his hands. sunk annihilated into his seat.

CHAPTER XIX.

ST. MARCEL FULFILS AN IMPORTANT MISSION, AND BECOMES SUDDENLY ENAMOURED OF SOLITUDE.

It yet wanted two whole days of the time appointed by Madame de Maintenon, for the next visit of Jeanne de St. Auney; an event which the maiden awaited with feelings of intensest anxiety. The nearer the period approached, the more agitated she became, although in the presence of her father, she succeeded in suppressing all outward show of mental anguish: nay, even attempting gaiety—seeking to enliven his solitary hours, by singing short snatches of the songs that most delighted his ear.

But, the old man's heart was heavy: it yearned after his other child, to whose self-devotion he was indebted for his liberty: the immensity of whose self-sacrifice he only now fully appreciated, when, surrounded with comforts, he remembered the dark, naked dungeon, he had so shortly since quitted, and pictured it tenanted by the frail blossom he had reared.

His efforts, as also those of Jeanne, to procure an interview with the young victim, had proved ineffectual, and though permission was accorded them to write to her, their letters remained unanswered; daily he wandered around the hated walls of the Bastile, looking anxiously towards the platform on the towers, in the hope of catching a glimpse of her person, but ever to return disappointed. Still he hoped, ere long,

again to enfold her to his bosom, for he doubted not that Louis Quatorze, to whom he had forwarded a memorial of her case, would command her liberation, whatever the issue of the suit pending against him in the Supreme Court. With such reflections as these, he endeavoured to console himself, and partially succeeded, though unable entirely to banish a secret presentiment of evil which continually hung over him, for he foresaw, that if foiled in one instance, D'Argenson would not scruple to frame fresh pretexts for continuing his systematic persecution.

In anticipation of the decision of his venal judges — at whose hands experience had taught him not to expect justice—he had resolved upon appropriating from the accumulated revenues of the property which he held in trust for the heir of his deceased friend, a sum sufficient to meet the amount of the bonds in the possession of his adversary's legal agent, Maitre Quinault, whom he now more than suspected of treachery: the step was one which his high sense of honour repudiated, but it was his last, his sole resource, to save himself and daughters from inevitable ruin, and the property itself from ultimately falling into the hands of his relentless persecutor: it was a step, which he felt he should have been justified in adopting, at an earlier period, but which he had refrained from, in the hopes of discovering a clue to the lost heir, and of rendering him his birthright, intact.

With regard to the accomplishment of the former event, however, his hopes had gradually grown less sanguine, so many years having elapsed since the disappearance of the object of his solicitude; yet, he did not consider the case wholly desperate, and acting upon a friendly hint, determined, being resident in the capital, to adopt measures, in the prosecution of the inquiry which now for some years had been suffered to lay dormant.

Still, he hesitated to appropriate any portion of the monies which he held in trust, in liquidation of D'Argenson's claim upon him by virtue of possession of his bonds, considering such appropriation tantamount to a breach of faith, both towards the testator and the heir. This might be carrying delicacy too far—perhaps straining the point of honor; but to him, honor stood in lieu of wealth—it constituted the brightest attribute of his character as a gentleman, a nobleman; and to reserve it unblemished, he felt capable of making any sacrifice, how great soever. His irresolution vanished on the receipt of an unexpected missive from the Supreme Court, commanding him, within the space of three days, to pay Monseigneur D'Argenson, the sum of sixty-five thousand crowns, or, in default, to surrender his person to His Most Christian Majesty's Governor of the Bastile: he at once perceived from what quarter this command emanated, and that no time was to be lost, if he hoped to counteract this last treachery of his old enemy's.

Jeanne had kept her visit to Versailles, a profound secret from her father, lest, in the event of Madame de Maintenon's intercession proving ineffectual, she should increase the anguish of a disappoint-

ment: she had not confided even in old Prevôt, whose babbling propensities would in case of success, certainly mar the pleasure of a surprise. Unaccustomed to dissimulation, the secret had several times been on the point of slipping out, both to her father and to her nurse; the latter of whom half suspected the sincerity of her nursling's replies to her many questions, on the score of her mysterious journey with old Antoine.

"How pale thou art, child;" said she to Jeanne, as they stood together at the window: "I'm sure something more than usual ails thee."

"I *am* not *quite* well, nurse," answered Jeanne; "this constant state of anxiety is of itself, sufficient to make me ill."

"Quite feverish, I declare," cried the matron, taking her hand; "thou must drink some cooling tisannes; I always take them myself when I am feverish."

Jeanne made no reply to the dame's recommendation of febrifuge beverage, but stood gazing upon the blue sky, apparently abstracted: as she gazed, two large tears fell from her eyes; her thoughts were upon her sister.

"Ah!" exclaimed Prevôt, with a bottomless sigh: "ever since we came to this wicked city, we have had nothing but trouble! Poor Julie! I wonder when we shall see her again!"

"It was of her I was thinking, nurse! there's no blue sky for her! They say that the prisoners never go out of their cell! Poor child!"

"Now, my dear Jeanne, I will not allow thee to cry;" observed the matron, sponging her own eyes with the corner of her apron, all the time; "every thing happens for the best, *de*pend upon it."

"'Tis hard to think so, nurse," replied Jeanne; "I cannot say, I do in the present case."

"Perhaps not, my dear; but be sure that he was a wise man who said so first: it was a most *re*-markable saying."

A long pause succeeded, during which the matron frequently hemmed and coughed, to attract her young mistress' notice; perceiving that her hints produced no effect, she ventured to address her.

"I've been thinking, child," said she, "that as it is a *re*-markably fine morning, it would do thee no harm to take a turn in the gardens of the Luxembourg: 'twill be a change, and a great deal better than staying shut up in this dismal house."

"Well, nurse, I think thou art right, for once: fetch me my hood, and we will go."

Prevôt received this announcement with great glee; their toilet was soon completed, and they sallied forth, arm in arm, the matron doing the honors of the conversation.

The morning was clear and mild; one of those genial mornings in December, which are often wont to hang upon the skirts of the autumn, as though striving to drag it back to keep winter away as long as possible; no frost, no fog, no damp—but bright crisp, and dry—one of those mornings, when the buoyant air gives wings to the spirits, and the body feels as though it could quit the earth with a bound, and sail amongst the fleecy clouds above: when, involun-

tarily, the eyes wander towards the brilliant firmament, and the heart follows the same secret impulse—travelling swifter than the wind, until it reaches the footstool of Nature's Author, there to sink enraptured with indefineable delight, and acknowledge the almightiness of the Power that called Heaven and Earth, and all things into existence.

Such were Jeanne's sensations—such her thoughts: Prevôt expressed her's too.

"A *re*-markably fine morning, to be sure! how *I* love to walk out in such weather! it does one so much good! when a girl, I used to be *re*-markably fond of walking—and so I should be now"—she stopped short, and clinging to her young mistress' arm, gave a shudder, staring vacantly straight before her.

"Why, Prevôt! what's the matter?" exclaimed Jeanne, much alarmed.

"Oh! *the* horrid face!" ejaculated the matron: "I saw it in amongst the trees there, in front of us."

"Let us return, good Prevôt, I pray," responded Jeanne; "thou hast quite alarmed me."

"Perhaps," remonstrated the nurse, "I was mistaken; for though I have been looking at the same place ever since, I have'nt seen anything of it again: a most *re*-markable circumstance, certainly."

"I should say it was fancy, nurse," observed her young companion: that goes a great way sometimes: and I must confess I cannot see anything like a face."

"Well, it might have been fancy, child; yet I can hardly believe fancy would make a tree make faces at me; ugh! and such a face! *re*-markably frightful to be sure."

They had now reached the grand avenue, at the western end of which rose the stately Palace of the Luxembourg,* with its white

* This Palace was originally called the Palais de Luxembourg, after the Duke of Epinay-Luxembourg, who, in 1564 purchased a house with gardens attached thereto, built in the middle of the fifteenth century, by one Robert de Harley de Sancy. In 1583, the Duke added several gardens, contiguous to the Hôtel de Sancy, and called the latter after himself. On the 2nd of April 1612, Marie de Medicis bought it for the sum of 90,000 francs, appending to it a farm situated to the eastward, and called the "Ferme de l'Hôtel Dieu," or more commonly, "Pressoir de l'Hôtel Dieu." In 1613, she further added twenty-five acres of land situated on the Boulevard side, and subsequently, a superficies of about 15,000 feet, being the gardens belonging to one Antoine Armand, together with several portions of the "Clos de Vignerai," appertaining to the Chartreux monks and others. In 1615, she laid the first stone of the new Palace, upon the site of the ancient Hôtel de Luxembourg; it was built from the design of Jacques Desbrosses, after the model of the Palazzo de Pitti, at Florence. She bequeathed it to Gaston de France, Duke of Orleans, her second son, who changed its name from Palais de Luxembourg, to Palais d'Orleans. It then fell by purchase, into the hands of Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orleans, Duchess of Angoulême, in consideration of a sum of 500,000 francs, and in 1672 became the property of Elizabeth d'Orleans, Duchess of Guise and Alençon, who, in 1694 gave it to Louis Quatorze. During the revolution, it became the seat of the provisional government, and was called, "Palais du Directoire," then, "Palais du Consulat," afterwards, "Palais du Sénat Conservateur." Louis XVIII held it as a gift from his brother, the unfortunate Louis Seize, who in 1779 had it repaired and embellished previously to giving it away. Under the present, or Louis-Philippe dynasty, it received the name which is engraved in gold letters over the portal, viz: "Palais de la Chambre des Pairs."

frontage, and countless windows; Prevôt was in ecstacies; stopping short, she withdrew her arm from within Jeanne's, pulled on her mittens, adjusted her spectacles more firmly upon her nose, and throwing up her hands, opening her eyes at the same time, exclaimed:

"Beautiful! *re*-markably beautiful, to be sure! and really, these are nice gardens!"

"Come! nurse;" said Jeanne, advancing a step or two without her; "thou wilt be remarked!"

The matron hastened to rejoin her companion, turning her head this way and that way to admire, now, a statue—now an urn—now the divers cariatides, placed here and there along the avenues, and at the corners of her walks: every thing she beheld, met with her approval; had she laid out the gardens, herself, she could not have been better pleased. Not far off was a young man, elegantly attired, who appeared to her to be watching her movements, although, once or twice, she fancied that his dark eyes were bent more intently upon her young mistress. They walked on, and so did he; now he would be before them, then behind, then on one side—then before them again. Jeanne pulled her hood more over her face, for she too had perceived him, and felt uncomfortable when she met his gaze; twitching Prevôt by the arm, she said, in a whisper, as they turned into another walk:

"Nurse; I think 'tis time we returned."

Prevôt heard the appeal, but answered not, being absorbed in the contemplation of a grotto at the end of the avenue which they had just entered.

It was a tall piece of masonry, consisting of three arches, or rather of one large arch, supported by two wings; on the top, on each side of these latter, was a figure in stone, in a reclining posture, holding a large jar, from which water appeared to issue; the centre arch, as also the wings on either side, contained each a pedestal, upholding, the principal one, a splendid Venus, and the others, two nymphs; from the top and sides of the niches in which they stood, as also from the front and sides of the grotto itself, depended long icicles, chiselled in the stone, the whole structure offering a curious though chaste appearance.

"Bless me! how *re*-markably interesting," exclaimed the matron, as they approached it; "perfectly romantic I declare! is it not child?"

Jeanne could not but express her admiration at the sight, but after looking at it a short time—finding that the avenue had no outlet—turned back for the purpose of regaining the principal walk: they came to a wooden bench, fixed beneath a tall birch, upon the former of which the matron's eyes no sooner rested than she ejaculated:

"*Re*-markably nice, to be sure, to find seats and all: let us sit down a few minutes, child; I feel fatigued."

To indulge her old companion, Jeanne readily assented, being moreover in that pensive state of mind, when the will is no longer

an active but a passive agent, and seating herself by her side, resumed the conversation.

"Is it not very singular, nurse," said she, "that we have never heard any tidings of poor Julie's lover; St. Leu? I almost fear some calamity has befallen *him* too!"

"It is, *re*-markably singular, child! for my part, I should'nt wonder to hear that he had got into the Bastile."

"The Bastile, nurse? what makes thee think of that place, above all others; what could he have done to be sent there?"

"Well I don't know, I'm sure; I can't say; but there's no telling: besides, he may not have done anything, and yet have been sent there; poor Julie did'nt—"

Again the matron uttered a suppressed scream, and pointing to a small cluster of trees, continued in a low tone:

"There child! there! did'nt you see it then?"

"See what, nurse? what alarms thee so?"

"The trees—in the trees, child: that horrid face! 'tis'nt the trees making faces this time."

Jeanne looked in the direction indicated by Prevôt, and beheld a visage gazing intently at them; nay, she even fancied the eyes fixed themselves particularly upon her: the expression of that face was so hideous, she involuntarily shuddered, and no longer wondered at her nurse's terror—her own was almost equal to it: still, there was nothing in the circumstance to alarm—the man was a stranger—he had disappeared without seeking to molest them—and was not accountable for the fashion of his countenance: it was childish to feel alarmed, and she told Prevôt so, and Prevôt agreed with her, but could not help thinking it "*re*-markably singular, that *that* face should produce such an effect upon both of them."

She was delivering herself of this last remark when the same elegant young man approached them from an opposite direction; he passed by them once, looking fixedly at Jeanne, and then returned; when, stopping immediately in front of her, he doffed his beaver, saluting her with a bow that would have done honour to the oldest noble of the court.

"*Re*-markably fine young man," observed Prevôt, in a whisper, as he drew near: "I wonder who he is!"

"Excuse me, Mademoiselle," said the young man, in a soft, polite tone, "but, have I not the honour of addressing Mademoiselle de St. Auney?"

"That is my name, indeed, Monsieur," replied Jeanne, blushing deeply, and drawing her hood more over her face to conceal her confusion.

"I thought I could not be mistaken," answered he; "the likeness to your sister is really striking."

"At the mention of her sister's name, Jeanne turned pale, and was so moved she could not speak. The stranger observed her embarrassment, and seeking to afford her time to recover herself, continued:

"I am sorry you left her at home—she would have—"

"At home!" ejaculated Jeanne, bursting into tears; "Oh! Monsieur; then you do not know—"

"What is it—what has happened?" said the stranger hurriedly, his changing countenance betraying his anxiety.

"Oh!—they have taken her to the Bastile!" sobbed the maiden.

"Gracious Heaven! Poor St. Leu!"

"Do you know St. Leu, then, Monsieur?"

"Know him! he and I are comrades—officers of the same corps. My name is St. Marcel le Trouvé; you may have heard him mention my name; he commissioned me to deliver this letter to Mademoiselle Julie: but under circumstances I had perhaps better retain it."

"No! give it to *me*, Monsieur," returned Jeanne, taking the letter: "it is better you should, for perhaps, we shall find an opportunity of sending it to her. But why was not Monsieur de St. Leu his own messenger."

"He—he is indisposed," stammered St. Marcel: "he is, for the present, confined to his chamber. If you will permit me, Mademoiselle, I will conduct you home," continued he, seeing that Jeanne had arisen to depart.

"I cannot refuse your escort, Monsieur," answered Jeanne, courteseying; "besides a friend, of the Chevalier St. Leu, will be always welcome to our hospitality—but my father is from home, and you must excuse me if I do not ask you in."

With this, Jeanne offered her arm to Prevôt, and directed her steps homewards, St. Marcel walking by their side.

"I will, with your permission, Mademoiselle," returned the latter, "pay you a visit to-morrow; I mount guard at the Palace, to-day at twelve; and it is already past eleven. But I have yet another message: 'tis to request you will give this packet to Monsieur le Baron: tell him that a friend commissioned me to deliver it: it is of importance that he should receive it as soon as possible."

So saying, he placed in her hands a sealed packet, addressed to her father, and having brought them by a different path, to a small gate which opened into the Rue d'Enfer, immediately opposite the Baron's residence, bowed an adieu to Jeanne, motioning the sentinel on duty to open the gate, an order which was peremptorily obeyed, the soldier presenting arms to him as he passed through, conducting Jeanne and her nurse. The salute did not escape the notice of the matron, who, smiling at the sentinel, through her spectacles, turned half round, and without loosing her mistress' arm, dropped him a low courtesy, ejaculating, half-aloud, as the door closed upon them:

"*Re*-markably civil; certainly!"

As St. Marcel once more turned into the avenue where he had first caught sight of Jeanne, he met D'Argenson, face to face, who, looking inquisitively at him, bowed, and passed on, the former returning his salute in silence. There was nothing very extraordinary in the circumstance itself—the encountering the Lieutenant of Police in a public garden—yet, St. Marcel felt as though he would rather not have met him—nor could he suppress the disagreeable sensation, and the in-

voluntary shudder which the meeting occasioned. However, with the disappearance of the individual, his equanimity returned, and he laughed to himself as he thought of the manner in which Jacques had deceived his employer, with respect to the execution of the *lettre-de-cachet*, against the Duke de Chartres' midnight assailant.

On the night preceding the foregoing events, according to appointment, St. Marcel repaired to the *cabaret* called the "Cep-de-Vigne, kept, as will be remembered, by Maitre Chopin, who, on his making himself known, conducted him into his cellar, and thence, by a secret door opening into the subterraneous passages of the Palais des Thermes, straight to the apartment of the spy, who was already in waiting to receive him.

The interview was brief, but important: it put St. Marcel in possession of the dreaded *lettre-de-cachet*, and of the sum which Jacques had extorted from the notary; but which, for obvious reasons, he was compelled to leave, taking away only a sufficiency for present purposes. It did more: it inspired our hero with confidence in his mysterious friend, whom he had not quitted that morning, without suspicions of his sincerity, and, in consideration of the secret protection that it afforded its members, reconciled him to the idea, of belonging to the community of which Jacques was the head.

As he was on the point of leaving, the latter gave him a sealed packet, addressed to the Baron de St. Auney, requesting our hero either to deliver it, himself, into his hands, or, into those of his daughter, and not to delay executing the commission: this, St. Marcel undertook the more readily, that he had not yet acquitted himself of a similar errand with which St. Leu had charged him to Julie de St. Auney; he was on his way to the Baron's house, when he unexpectedly fell in with Jeanne and her old nurse, in the manner already described.

His notice was attracted to the former, from her great resemblance to the miniature which he had, since the duel, so often seen in his friend's possession; besides which, St. Leu had so minutely described the two sisters, that it was impossible to mistake them; the result has been shown.

He came to the by-avenue where he had accosted Jeanne; an irresistible impulse urged him to enter it; he walked slowly up to the spot which she had so recently quitted; he found it charming; he unconsciously sat down on the same seat; looked towards the same trees; admired the same blue sky; then, dwelt upon her features—figure—the tone of her voice—the expression of her countenance—her gait—gestures—all this he did—and that solitary walk appeared to him so enchanting, as if he felt he could linger there, to dream that dream for ever.

CHAPTER XX.

THE COMMANDANT MAKES HIMSELF COMFORTABLY AT HOME. HIS PRIVACY IS INTERRUPTED BY AN UNINVITED GUEST. ST. LEU'S ARREST.

During the whole period of St. Marcel's constrained sojourn under the hospitable roof of Commandant Schwillwein, the latter personage was a prey to anxiety—an emotion, be it said, that had never manifested itself so unmistakeably, but once before—when, during the Dutch wars, he had been taken prisoner by the enemy, and shut up in a dungeon with the comforting assurance, that at the end of an hour he should be marched out and shot: yes! he had felt anxiety on that momentous occasion—an anxiety to get away—and the circumstance is here recorded as a decisive proof, that the very largest-chested man, may be pervious to petty human weaknesses.

In the present instance, he knew that he was a *particeps criminis*, not a victim—having, moreover, under his very eyes, the living proofs of his guiltiness—St. Leu, and St. Marcel. Nor was it policy to dispense with the presence of the latter, until the former should be so far recovered, as to baffle inquiry, respecting the true nature of his malady. Hence his anxiety aforesaid—betraying itself in fifty different ways—hasty journies to and from St. Leu's chamber—subsequent mysterious conferences with Dame Dorothé — gloomy ruminations over untasted bottles of Burgundy — moody breakfasts — moodier dinners — bilious suppers — suspicious starts at stray knocks—scrupulous examinations, with knitted brows, of the superscription of letters written in unknown hands—the establishment of a postern to escape from the enemy in the event of a surprise—indistinct notions of perforating his heart with his own sword, rather than be dragged to the Bastile—all this, but especially the total abolishment of any thing approaching to a joke, afforded indubitable testimony of the Commandant's anxiety. Notwithstanding his gloominess, however, he played an occasional game at picquet, with St. Marcel, and, profiting by his abstraction, made every point with amazing skill—pocketing his luckless opponent's stakes with the only positive symptoms of a smile that could have been sworn to.

For the first two days, St. Leu was dangerous; Dame Dorothé redoubled her attentions: on the third, the fever abated; the Commandant swore an oath, implying his determination to allow his Satannic Majesty to kidnap him, if St. Leu did not recover under her treatment: on the fourth day, the patient sat up in bed, of his own accord, and complained of hunger; Schwillwein placed the contents of a most plethorick larder, at his command; but overruled by the matron, whose opinion was diametrically opposed to his forthwith emptying the same, St. Leu was compelled to comfort his inward man with a cup of broth: on the fifth, the patient remained long closeted up with his friend St. Marcel, the results of

which were, the letter to Julie, and an inability on the part of her lover, to eat the very whitest slice off the breast of the fowl, that Dame Dorothé's own hands had dressed: on the sixth day, the fair Œsculapius pronounced him completely out of danger: in the fulness of his heart, the Commandant swore another oath, to the effect that she was at least fifty times deeper in the mysteries of doctoring, than his old friend Schwipps, the veterinary surgeon of the regiment, who, to his knowledge, never cured but one man, in his whole course of practice, and that was by administering to him in a mistake, a pill, originally intended for his horse—(this, in Schwipps' life-time, used to be the Commandant's standing joke against him.) But not to detail the progress of the cure from day to day, suffice it to add, that on the eighth morning, St. Leu joined his host at the breakfast-table, where he afforded abundant evidence of being in a fair way of recovering, at least a portion of his appetite: on that evening St. Marcel regained his liberty, the use he made of which, and the consequences it entailed have been already shewn.

On the same bright morning that had tempted forth the beautiful Jeanne—nay, almost even whilst St. Marcel was holding converse with her, the noble Commandant might have been seen making most ominous preparations for an attack—*secundum artem belli*—upon a formidable army of viands, which the ever attentive Dorothé had marshalled, rank and file, on purpose to provoke his long dormant appetite: a complete *dèjeuner à la fourchette*—hour, noon—the Commandant just returned from parade, and military exercise—nothing could be more opportune.

There was a nice bright wood fire blazing and crackling away in the chimney—it burnt so merrily, one might have thought the big logs were rejoicing in their own combustion, and cracking off jokes at their own expense: then the table—drawn as close up to the hearth, as it could be; so close as to threaten its old carved legs and feet with blisters; and the Commandant's easy chair, elbowing it all the while with the greatest familiarity—the great griffin on its quaint back, grinning the most good-natured grin, for a griffin, that was ever seen—offering quite a problem of cacchinnatory indiscretion to the animal creation, and winking first at the table, then at the arms of the chair, as much as to say—"only wait, and see, what we shall contain presently." And was there not a foot-stool, too? yes! for the Commandant had the night before complained that gout—the bloated wretch—had trodden on his foot—so there must have been a foot-stool—Dame Dorothé never would have overlooked that, considering what a pair of eyes—spectacled ones too—she had to comforts. Yes! there *was* a foot-stool—the very thing itself for a gouty toe; without which, reposing on its well-quilted top, it would have been incomplete: only to look at it, actually made one's toe itch for the complaint! Well, then; the foot-stool was comfortable—the easy chair was comfortable—the cheerful fire was comfortable—the table was comfortable—but superlatively so, the dainties upon it. In came the owner of all these

comfortable things: since eight that morning, he had been manœuvering his regiment, for he was not a man to neglect his duties to his country: how the eye and a half twinkled, as it roamed, voluptuously, over that feast—that *dèjeuner à la fourchette!* Off went his sword and belt—away flew his beaver and his gloves into one corner—his large boots into another—one of them had been squeezing his gouty toe most unsympathizingly all the morning—in the excitement of the moment, he whipped off his stock, threw open the breast of his coat—to the sore endamagement of the lace *jabot* which the matron's own hands had got up—tucked up his ruffles, and with an "ouf!" an unctuous "ouf!" sunk into that easy chair, over-topped by the facetious griffin, and forthwith began making himself *comfortable*: comfortable in the true English acceptation, *not*, let it be understood, in the French sense of the word, which is decidedly negative, and whose existence, in connection with the established domestic usages of the country, offers an example of perfect anomaly.

From the small ivory ring within whose embrace it was enfolded, the Commandant first withdrew a very white napkin, which he carefully disposed of under his chin, arranging the same, so as to form a bib, the lower part depending upon and enwrapping his Falstaffian person: then again did the eye and a half wander restlessly over the viands, and crystal drops hang about the corners of his mouth; the sensation that summoned them, causing even his mustaches to curl downwards towards his plate: it was a moment of delicious suspense, to prolong which, amounted to positive felicity.

Oh! that breakfast *à la fourchette!* A fat truffled capon, offering his white breast to the knife—a Périgord pasty, all crimped and shiny, with a couple of the tiniest red feet sticking out from the top, that a partridge ever ran away upon, from the parent-nest—a Bayonne ham—just prime in cut—juicy, pink, and smoky—then the olives—and the cresses so green and crisp—and the delicate pats of butter, moulded into the shape of a heart by the indefatigable matron—and the white rolls—the wine too—those two bottles of Chablis, uncorked and ready for hand. Oh! Dame Dorothé! thou hadst thy mind intent upon mischief when thou didst place those bottles so near the butter-hearts, and so close to that dish of oysters! Yes! oysters! not vulgar, bloated, over-grown oysters, one of which would choke the most capacious gullet; but oysters, small and green; swimming in their own juice in their own under shell—oysters, green as the deep that gave them birth—or the weeds that float upon her bosom—surrounded by the smallest possible fringe of beard, black as ebony—and with the whitest little circle of fat in the middle, that ever tempted *gourmand!* Two dozen of them, snug and close in one dish, and by their side, two bottles of Chablis! Oh! Dame Dorothé! where is the Commandant's heart if he withstands that?

Perhaps that identical portion of the noble Schwillwein's comparative anatomy *was* touched; it seemed like it; for the tears trickled down his cheeks, as the oysters disappeared one by one—till not a shadow of them remained, save their under shell—bumpers of that

same Chablis, washed them down, in the proportion of one to every half-dozen, the disappearance of each being accompanied by a loud smack of the lips, which fully indicated the high relish it added to the oysters aforesaid.

The truffled capon was dismembered—or rather, about to be—for the Commandant had stuck his fork into it, when a voice from behind, observed:

"That's a glorious breakfast, Sieur Commandant! A good appetite to thee."

Schwillwein looked round—for he sat with his back to the door, and had not heard it open—the eye and a half fired off cannon-balls of anger at the intruder, who, however, took no notice, but bowed deferentially, and stepped into the middle of the apartment.

"Damn—"no! he did not say *that*—but he made use of another word equally significant in the language that he spoke, and addressed it to the new comer, continuing: "thou art the man that dogged me so this morning. What's thy business?"

"We will breakfast, first, if you please Sieur Commandant," replied the other, with perfect coolness; "after that, we'll to business!" and without further ceremony, he prepared to take his seat at the table.

"Insolent!" cried Schwillwein, starting up, with the fowl impaled upon his fork; "what is the meaning of this? Leave the house this moment, or my lacquey shall kick thee out!"

The Commandant, foaming with passion, made a movement to ring the bell, but the intruder laid his hand upon his arm, and withheld him, saying:

"Stop; I have a word or two to say to thee, ere I depart: be seated."

"Say what thou hast to say, and go," continued the Commandant, still standing; "how durst such a fellow as thou, intrude upon my privacy."

"Thou certainly hast the advantage of me in *clothes*, Sieur Commandant," responded his visiter; "but there ends the distinction between us; however, with thy permission, I will take a draught of wine, for I have come some distance to see thee."

Without waiting for his host's consent, the uninvited guest assisted himself to a copious draught of the Chablis, having discussed which, he deliberately seated himself at the table, and completed the operation upon the truffled capon, which Schwillwein had begun. Placing upon the plate of the latter, a portion of the delicate viand, he helped himself to another, when, remarking that the Commandant manifested no degree of haste to join him, but stood gazing at his proceedings with an air of bewilderment, he again requested him to seat himself, observing:

"Make no stranger of *me*, Commandant; see! I am quite at home."

Now the personage addressed was one of those, whose bile, being of very effervescent quality, bubbles up and froths with a suddenness,

only to be matched by the rapidity with which it subsides—the gaseous particles flying off in the form of round oaths, demonstrations, and such like: but if his anger, one minute at a hundred, fell the next to zero, the fact might be regarded as a proof of the generosity of his nature, which was apt, from its very super-excellence, to burst from its usual bonds, and like the Chablis he so loved—when wrought up by the vine-growers, to champagne-pitch—fly up in the face of him, who the next minute might test its virtue.

The self-possession of the stranger did much towards cooling down the red-heat of the Commandant, for, no atmosphere is better qualified to check the rise of an irate man's mercury, than that of perfect *sang-froid*—thus, his unbidden guest, no sooner began "making *himself* at home," than Schwillwein found himself irresistibly impelled to follow his example, wondering what would be the end-all of so strange a visit. Fear of the stranger, did not, for an instant, enter his breast; and, regarding him in a military point of view, the Commandant inwardly confessed that His Most Christian Majesty's Corps of Musketeers, could not boast of a soldier such as he would make: he also liked the expression of his countenance, his abrupt manners, his gait—in fact, coupling his prejudices in the man's favour, with the fact of the latter having followed him about the whole of that morning, he began to apprehend that his guest had sought him for the purpose of enrolling himself amongst the devoted defenders of His Most Christian Majesty—and under this impression, once more seated himself in his easy chair.

"Sieur Commandant, your health," observed his companion, tossing off a bumper.

"Thine, friend," replied Schwillwein: "had I expected thy company, better fare should have been provided."

"You do not do justice to it," retorted the other; "I fear I have spoilt your breakfast."

"I *am*, rather surprised at the intrusion, friend," answered the perplexed host; "how did you obtain admission?"

"Your lacquey is a friend of mine," replied his guest, deeply absorbed in the investigation of the contents of the Périgord pasty. "Have you any more wine handy?"

Probably the Commandant considered this too good a joke not to laugh at it, for the truth must be told, that laugh he did, nor hesitated whilst he laughed, to open a very snug little cupboard that was let into the wall, thence withdrawing a second loving gemini of the self-same Chablis as that which had just refected their thirsty palate; these he placed upon the table, his eye and a half twinkling all the time, with the greatest good humour—for he was, in the main, a good humoured man, although an irascible one. Perhaps the effort of laughing restored his appetite, for, he now laid seige to the pasty, in right earnest, effecting a wondrous breach in the wall of crust, in order the more readily to capture the luscious morsels within. It was wonderful to behold the rapidity with which they disappeared, and slice after slice was washed down; nor did the stranger ply his mandibles

less vigorously than his host, who quite himself again, began thinking, in the fulness of his hospitality, that the unknown had conferred a great favour upon him by joining him so unceremoniously.

"Good wine," exclaimed the latter, applying his very prominent olfactory organ to the nose of the fourth bottle: "your glass, Commandant."

"Thank you, friend," responded Schwillwein, holding it out: "I'll propose a toast; His Most Christian Majesty's service."

This sentiment was of course hazarded by the proposer, with an eye to business.

"His Most Christian Majesty's service," replied the other; "and the most noble corps belonging to it—the Musketeers."

This was meeting the matter half-way—at least the Commandant thought so—he felt certain his first impression was correct, and determined to follow up the excellent opportunity afforded him.

"Ah!" said he, smacking his lips, and winking the eye and a half; "'tis a most noble corps, and a most noble service."

"I should say so," retorted his companion, cracking between his white teeth, the juicy drum-stick of a partridge; "it must be, to enable you to live so well! You have been many years in it, Commandant."

The remark was made neither interrogatively, nor affirmatively; merely, as it appeared, to court an answer.

"I *have* seen *some* service, friend;" responded Schwillwein.

"About thirty years, of it," observed his guest.

The Commandant started.

"You appear well informed," said he; "may I ask the favour of your name?"

"Certainly!" retorted the unknown, replenishing the glasses, but without appearing to think that the permission to ask the question involved the favour of an answer.

"Eh, hem! Your name, friend," resumed the latter, after a pause.

"Oh! Jacques! 'Tis very much at your service."

Schwillwein scratched his ear a great many times, as though, having lost his memory, it had concealed itself behind that organ, and he was wheedling it out from its hiding-place by titillation. However, finding that it was proof against coaxing, and obstinately refused to return to its proper locality, he looked very hard at the speaker, repeating his name over to himself.

"Jacques! Jacques! Hum! Can't say I remember that name: nor do I recollect ever having seen your face before, friend."

"Perhaps not," replied Jacques; "my face is mostly an unwelcome one: though 'tis pretty common about Paris! Your's is altered, Commandant; almost as much as your name; only that there *is* a bit of the other left to swear by."

Had a bomb-shell, with its lighted fusee, by any marvellous chance fallen at the Commandant's feet, as he sat over his breakfast, he would incontestibly have felt uncomfortable; but it is doubtful whether he would have turned half so pale, or started half so far back,

from that formidable missile, as he did from Jacques, when the latter so unexpectedly discharged, full into his very teeth, the secret with which he had mysteriously loaded himself for the occasion.

There followed a brief pause, which the spy advantageously filled up by renewing his attack upon the fourth bottle.

"Don't be alarmed," said he, addressing his host; "it is my interest to keep the secret."

"But," asked Schwillwein, interrupting him, "how came you to know it?"

"Never mind, how," replied Jacques; "I have not time, now, to tell you: but you see I do know it. Come! we have fared sumptuously; let us to the subject that brought me hither."

The Commandant's first impression—that Jacques had sought him for the purpose of confessing his irresistible affection for His Most Christian Majesty's service—had, by this time, entirely disappeared; he had so far recovered from his surprise as to be prepared to hear his whole history from him, without flinching; nor did he know why he should fear the communication, when he reflected, that only one event of his life, to which he could revert, had ever caused him any compunction, and even in that instance, he had been only the passive instrument of his early patron's will. He therefore drew up again nearer to Jacques, and with a slight inclination of the head towards him, observed, in answer to his remark:

"Well, Sieur Jacques; what *has* brought thee hither?"

"Simply this," retorted that individual; "to collect a few facts, connected with your last journey from Tours to this city. 'Tis now, rather more than twenty-one years since you quitted the former—is it not, Sieur Commandant?"

The latter nodded assent, adding:

"It was after the Peace of Nimeguen; I went to visit my father."

"Monseigneur D'Argenson was, at that period," resumed Jacques, "Lieutenant of the Bailiwick of the province."

"He was; at Tours I first became acquainted with him."

"Exactly! you became very friendly, and he promised to exert his interest, when you returned to Paris, to procure your advancement: he kept his word; for although you left Tours, a non-commissioned officer, you had not been a month in Paris before you obtained a sub-lieutenancy."

"Your information, friend Jacques, is marvellously correct,"

"And pray, Sieur Commandant, what *service* did *you* render him, to merit his powerful patronage?"

"I see you know all," replied Schwillwein, with some trepidation; "do not interrogate me further."

"I do know *something*, but not *all*," replied Jacques; "yet, lest you should doubt me, I will, with your permission, continue. He commissioned you to take charge of a young male-child?"

"He did," responded the Commandant, interrupting him; "it was his own: a child, whose mother he had seduced, and—'

"Liar!" muttered the spy, grinding his teeth with rage; "liar! to invent so foul a tale! *His* child!"

"Do I understand you?" asked Schwillwein, reddening; "would you assert it was *not* his? Whose then?"

"That is the secret I am now striving to fathom," resumed Jacques; "the object of my visit is to learn what became of that unfortunate?"

"My instructions," replied the Commandant, "were to leave him at a certain house in the faubourg St. Antoine, where, I understood, he was to remain, until his father came to Paris. This I did, and have never since heard of him, for I was told subsequently, that both the child and the woman in whose charge I left him, had suddenly disappeared."

"Worse and worse," ejaculated Jacques; "do you remember her name, or the number of the house?"

"Her name, was Gertrude Leroux; a midwife; she lived somewhere about the middle of the street, but I forget the number; besides which, they have been altered."

"Could you take me to the spot?"

"Certainly! at any time."

"Then I will call for you, Commandant, as soon as I am prepared. For the present, let the matter rest between ourselves. Your secret shall remain safe here."

The spy placed his hand on his heart as he spoke, and bidding his host a "good morning," departed forthwith, after exacting a promise from him, that he would obey his injunctions.

"Where is Monsieur de St. Leu?" asked Schwillwein of the domestic whom he had summoned to clear away the remnants of the feast.

"He went out, about two hours ago, Commandant. I have not seen him since."

"Out! gone out! oh! what will Madame Dorothé say?" observed the noble Schwillwein.

"I heard her say she thought a short walk would do the Chevalier good," said the domestic.

"Oh! oh! that's another affair, Pierre;" remarked the host, softening down; "if Madame Dorothé said he might go out, of course—eh, hem!—that's all I want, Pierre."

Pierre bowed and left the Commandant to his reflections.

Julie's lover—her affianced husband in fact—tempted by the fineness of the morning, had, after due advice taken of his attentive nurse, Dame Dorothé, strolled into the gardens of the Thuileries to breathe a mouthful of fresh air. He reached that portion of it, which, on account of its southern aspect, has not inaptly been nick-named, "La Petite Provençe"—then, as now, the resort of invalids, old and young, who, at all hours, but especially in the morning, may be seen congregated in groups, sunning their blanched cheeks, and talking over the politics of the day.

How many smiling children have frolicked in that sunny corner, happily unconscious of the disease that, even whilst they smiled, was

preying upon their vitals! How many an anxious mother, there sat, and watched her infant drooping on her bosom; her cares increasing daily, as daily she beheld it withdrawing from that warm, bright sun, into the cold, dark tomb! How many friends have there shaken hands together, promising to meet again on the morrow—a morrow that never came! Oh! to him who visited it daily, that sunny corner was a book, whose leaves were always open; in which he might read a lesson of morality worth all the homilies ever preached to Christendom! 'Tis still there!

But for all that, "La Petite Provençe" has its charms, and after a few turns up and down the principal avenues, St. Leu took his seat amongst the other invalids, though somewhat apart from them. No one noticed him, as he sat, abstracted, and silent: now gazing intently at the sky—now at the trees, shaking their leafless branches, in gentle cadence; the child that came up to him, and smiled so archly in his face, ran away again unheeded—his thoughts—ah—where were his thoughts?

He wronged that maiden in them—his heart told him so—or why did its throbbings multiply as he dwelt upon the past? The present hung heavily upon him. Nature's smiling face had suddenly become disfigured—the harmony of her works, disturbed: the bright sky was cloudy—the fresh air, tainted with corruption—the cheerful twitter of the feathered multitude, grated on his ear—he, himself, was changed: one radiant day-dream had been his—one long day-dream of love: he had awoke—it had vanished—but the memory of it still hovered about him, like the warm twilight of a happiness that had set; and in that he yet basked, cherishing hopes of a brighter dawn. Ah! he wronged that maiden, in thought—but wronging, loved her still!

St. Leu had early embraced the military career; as much from hereditary predilection, as in obedience to the will of his late father; who, besides being a widower, (he had lost his wife in the second year of his marriage) had no patrimony to leave his son, save an unsullied name, and the sword of his ancestors. At the early age of fifteen, the young St. Leu followed the Chevalier to the siege of Mons, then invested by the troops of the celebrated Marshal de Luxembourg;* here his sire fell. Burning with ambition to distinguish himself, the youthful soldier headed his dying father's corps, and with an impetuosity, far beyond his years, rushed forward to the assault, and succeeded in effecting a lodgment in the enemy's works. The fame of this precocious act of valour, soon spread through the army, and reached the ear of the Duke of Chartres, then only seventeen, who, like himself, had made his military *début* at the same siege. The Prince felt interested in the young hero, appointed him one of his aide-de-camps, and finally, on their return from the campaign, procured him a captaincy in his royal uncle's Corps of Musketeers.

* On account of the number of colours which he took from the enemy and sent to Paris, in 1690, 1692, and 1695, the Prince de Conti gave him the brilliant nickname of "*Tapissier de Notre Dame*:" Upholsterer of Notre Dame.

A journey to Tours—undertaken for the benefit of his health—was the means of bringing him into the company of the Baron de St. Auney and of his beautiful daughters: this event took place, about a year before the commencement of this tale, nor was it long before a mutual passion sprung up between the handsome Chevalier and the Baron's younger daughter, Julie. More anxious to secure her happiness by marrying her to a man of her choice, than to raise her to superior rank and fortune, by sacrificing her affections, the doting father, at the earnest request of the fond couple, gave his consent to their union, conditionally, on the plea of Julie being still too young to marry, that one twelvemonth should elapse, from that time, before it took place: it wanted but a few weeks of the period, when the events occurred which necessitated his journey to the capital.

The Chevalier was a slightly built, fair complexioned young man—with dark hazel eyes, and bright chesnut hair, worn, according to the prevailing fashion, in long curls, hanging down over the shoulders; a slight mustache—a mere feather, twisted into a point at each end—ornamented his upper lip; his features were remarkably fine—his countenance open and frank, with a somewhat melancholy cast: his costume, was that of the corps, to which he belonged.

He had reached the Rue St. Honorè, on his return to the Commandant's, when an ill-favoured individual accosted him, whom, he recognized as an agent of police: the man was accompanied by two others, who kept a little in the rear, though near enough to render their object suspicious.

"I am sorry, Monsieur le Chevalier," said the man, saluting St. Leu with some show of deference, "very sorry to—to—interrupt your walk; I have an unpleasant duty to perform."

"What is it?" asked St. Leu, turning pale.

"I am compelled to arrest you," answered the man, beckoning to his two satellites, who drew nearer.

St. Leu echoed the man's words, adding that he must be labouring under some mistake.

"There is none, I assure you, Chevalier," resumed the latter, adding in an under tone; "it is a *lettre-de-cachet.*"

"Is it possible?" ejaculated the unfortunate victim; "of what am I accused? and by whom?"

"My duty is to arrest you in the King's name, Chevalier;" replied the man, "I cannot tell you wherefore. If you will step into the Rue St. Nicaise, I will procure a coach."

St. Leu knew that remonstrance or resistance would be useless, and with a heavy heart resigned himself into the custody of his captor, who at once conveyed him to the Bastile.

CHAPTER XXI.

MAITRE QUINAULT VISITS D'ARGENSON.

For some time after Jacques had taken leave of Maitre Quinault, the worthy notary remained in a state of stupor, from which he only recovered, to break out into a violent rage, discharging at the heels of the spy, a volley of oaths, that would have set up even D'Argenson himself, for a twelvemonth at the very least: having exhausted the catalogue of the time—by no means an inconsiderable one, seeing that swearing was fashionable—he unburdened himself of a private stock of the same commodity, the very mildest-drawn of which made him gnash his teeth, and foam as he let them loose.

"Oh! my gold! my gold! my bright, yellow gold!" said he, clutching the bag that Jacques had modestly declined taking away; "never shall I see it again! Thirty-five thousand crowns! oh! that he had their weight in mill-stones, hung about his neck, and I could see him cast headlong into the Seine! Robbed! cheated! swindled of my shining gold! One hundred thousand crowns in all! oh! to be able to pour it, molten, drop by drop, down his throat, and say—'twas gold thou would'st have—there's gold for thee! ah! ah! ah! there's more for thee—and more—and more! My good gold—my hard-earned gold; gone! gone! One hundred thousand crowns in all! oh! oh!"

With an exhaustless flood of such exclamations as these, accompanied by sundry shakings of his fist at the door, the old notary endeavoured to allay the excitement that the late scenes had occasioned, and having partially succeeded, began to take a legal view of his position, allowing himself all the advantage of his experience, in the management of knotty cases like the present: the result of his cogitations was a determination to pay a visit to the Lieutenant of Police.

That evening, as the clocks of the neighbouring churches chimed nine, Maitre Quinault might have been observed, creeping along the Rue St. Denis, tenaciously keeping the wall-side, although at the imminent danger of being knocked down by the multitude that thronged that busy thoroughfare; for it is to be observed, in connection with the locomotive habits of that fussy animal—the true-born Parisian—that he possesses an inconceivable fondness for always taking the wall of his fellow, the consequence of which is a continual skirmish between the off-siders and the near-siders, producing an amount of confusion, perfectly picturesque, and imparting to the streets, when seen from an elevation, that diversified air, commonly called "higgledy-piggledy;" the comfort of which, to pedestrians, must be felt to be appreciated. But Maitre Quinault was not a man to be

jostled out of his place with impunity, and many were the strokes he dealt about him right and left, with his cane, in his attempts to maintain his right to the wall. At length, by dint of elbowing, and pushing, and cursing, and swearing—he *could* swear—and falsely too sometimes—he reached the house he sought—Monseigneur D'Argenson's place of business—and making the best of his way into the apartment already known, as his Cabinet Noir, saluted that virtuous functionary with a low bow and an humble apology for intruding.

"I fear that I am interrupting your labours," said he, with an obsequious smile, and a leer that said, as plainly as a leer could say, "I should like to know what you are doing with that great book!"

"You are, *sang-dieu*!" exclaimed his friend, with a delightful contraction of the eye-brows; "what has brought thee?"

"Important business, Monseigneur. 'Tis a long tale."

"Wait then," resumed D'Argenson, looking down again at the book; "I'll attend to thee presently; would'nt to-morrow do?"

"No, Monseigneur!"

"Hum! Jean-Baptiste Poisson," ejaculated the latter, entering that name in his Book of Reports, and apparently unconscious of the notary's presence; "the Bastile *ought to be razed to the ground or burnt*, ought it—and *Paris wouldn't lose much*, eh? that's *thy* opinion, Jean-Baptiste Poisson, is it?" continued he, addressing the book as though it personated the individual mentioned; "and no harm can come to thee for expressing it, eh? well, well! we shall see!" here he filled up a blank space on a piece of parchment that laid by his side; "thou shalt try whether cursing it, will open the doors of thy dungeon! ah! ah! ah! I deserve to be sent there to starve, do I? we'll teach thee how to starve his Majesty's officers! *ventre-bleu!* and to speak disrespectfully of the Bastile! Thou shalt try its diet thyself! ah! ah! ah! demagogue! 'Tis such men as thou, that bring governments into disrepute! Scum! What right has the mob to an opinion? eh, Maitre Quinault?" he now turned towards that individual; "what sayest thou?"

But Maitre Quinault—probably because he thought it too delicate a subject to be lightly handled—offered no remark in reply; he only looked at his interrogator, as much as to say that, if it made no difference, he would rather be excused from giving any opinion at all.

"I say," continued D'Argenson, apparently regardless whether the notary answered or not—"that the rabble have no right to express their opinion on such grave matters, Maitre Quinault! all they have to do, is to work—to pay their imposts—and to hold their tongue! *sang-dieu!*"

Most likely, the notary concluded that in the present instance, it was prudent for him to do the same; for he only coughed, and expectorated into his pocket-handkerchief.

The Lieutenant of Police, still intent upon his entries, continued to throw off his remarks as he went on, as if by way of easing his conscience, and giving Maitre Quinault the benefit of it: though, as

he read aloud what he wrote, and spoke parenthetically, the latter had some difficulty in catching his meaning.

"Things are come to a pretty pass—" (Sieur St. Marc)—this was the commencement of a letter to that worthy—"when the rabble—" (the prisoner, Jean-Baptiste Poisson,) "begin to interfere—"(says that I,) "with the institutions of the country!" (and all who have to do with) "*Tonnerre-dieu!*" (the Bastile,) "What next? why they—"(ought to be sent there,) "will take the law into their own hands—" (and starved in company.) "hang all who—" (Do with him) "oppose them—" (what thou wilt,) "and set up a—" (and let him free again) "government—" (in a twelvemonth;) "of their own—" (that is if he should live so long.) The scum!" (Thine, D'Argenson.) "Now Maitre Quinault what brings thee here?"

The diversion was sudden, but quite grateful to the legal functionary, who never heard the Bastile mentioned, without feeling as if all the blood had been let out of his veins, through the soles of his feet, and iced water pumped up into them through the same medium.

But not until D'Argenson had exhibited some few energetic symptoms of impatience, could Maitre Quinault muster up sufficient courage to tell his tale, and when he did begin, he stammered so, one would have said the words were elbowing each other in the corners of his mouth, in a vain attempt to sneak out edgewise. To increase his embarrassment, the Lieutenant of Police fixed his keen eyes upon him, very intently; and he must have been a very hyena at a stare, who could return that gaze without blinking: this was not the case with the notary, who had rather more of the fox in his composition, than of any other animal, unless it was a dash of the jackall: however, having broken the ice, he went swimmingly on through the aperture, D'Argenson never once attempting to stop him, nor even betraying, by the least sign, that he took the slightest interest in his recital.

At length Maitre Quinault came to a full stop, giving a side-long glance at his companion, as though he expected him to make some observation; in this he was disappointed, for he maintained the same obstinate silence, not even appearing to know that the notary had left off speaking; observing which, the latter personage took up his last words, by way of giving the cue to his friend.

"Yes! Monseigneur! *there shall be hanging at the Grève;* he said *that,* and left me."

"Is that all; Maitre Quinault?" asked D'Argenson, after a pause.

The notary bowed, and with some show of surprise at the question, confessed that it *was* all.

"He was right," resumed the Lieutenant of Police, "quite right," he meant Jacques—" to say that there should be hanging at the Grève, Maitre Quinault; but I fear it is not Jacques' turn yet."

The notary began to think he had made a mistake in throwing himself upon the clemency of D'Argenson, and already experienced an uncomfortable tightness about the throat, accompanied by an indefinite sensation of suspension; but he had made up his mind

before he came—not to be hanged—no—but to hang the spy if he could, and doubted not being able to secure the protection of the Lieutenant of Police; his surprise may be conceived when he heard him indirectly reiterate Jacques' menace, but his surprise once got over, he assumed an air of dogged determination, and sullen defiance, that failed not to produce a marked effect upon his companion: to look at him, one would have said that he was positively asking to be hanged, as a favour.

"Perhaps, Monseigneur," said he, with the greatest deliberation, making at the same time, an ugly attempt to look facetious, "perhaps your turn will come first; who knows?"

D'Argenson turned his head aside, his lips quivered, and his brows knit together convulsively; he was evidently taken aback by the retort, and saw that he had gone too far—further indeed than he intended—but with the adroitness for which he was so remarkable, he immediately shifted his ground, not wishing to provoke the astute notary, lest, to silence him, he should be compelled to incarcerate him, and thus lose a useful auxiliary, whose co-operation it was his interest to secure.

"I did not mean thee to infer, Sieur Notaire," he observed, with an abortive laugh at Maitre Quinault's repartee—obviously risked with a view of swindling that individual into a belief that he, D'Argenson, considered it a smart joke—"I did not mean thee to infer, I say, that *thine* was come: I merely hinted that this was an awkward affair. Am not I as deeply compromised as thou? *ventre bleu!*"

"With this difference, Monseigneur, that you have power to extricate yourself from the consequences; whereas I am more likely to see the Bastile or the Grève, unless you exert that power to save me, likewise."

"As I did once before, eh, Maitre Quinault! Agreed! What hast thou to propose?"

"Simply that your agent be forthwith arrested and imprisoned, and hanged as soon as possible after we have regained posession of that document."

"A good, a ready plan, truly;" answered D'Argenson, after a few moments reflection; "but it is impracticable, Sieur Notaire; impracticable."

"Wherefore, Monseigneur?"

"He is invaluable to me, Etienne, I have need of his services! Besides; I am not so sure that to imprison him first, and hang him, afterwards, would be the best means of regaining possession of that document."

"But threats, Monseigneur!" suggested the notary, anxiously.

D'Argenson laughed, echoing with great emphasis, the word, "*threats*," accompanied with a look that said, "*they* may do very well for such as thou, Maitre Quinault, but not for a spirit like Jacques."

"Thou dost not know that man," he replied; "*I* do not! He is one of those, whom it is dangerous to offend, and hardly less dangerous to deal with! I need his services, yet; therefore, Maitre Quinault, we must think of some other plan!"

"I can think of *no* other," said the notary, once more disagreeably alive to a sensation of vertebral dislocation, and losing the self-possession he had so recently assumed.

"Wait a moment," ejaculated the Lieutenant of Police; "let *me* think? Perhaps I may discover a way of turning this untoward circumstance to our account! Answer me! Art thou sure Jacques did not see thee sign that parchment?"

"I am, Monseigneur."

"Good, good," exclaimed D'Argenson; "so far, good: dost thou not then perceive, Etienne, that there is no witness to prove 'twas thou, eh? Besides, is not the will drawn in *my* favour, eh? Shall not *I* be suspected, before thou art, eh? Let me alone, Maitre Quinault—let me alone—'tis *I* must bear the brunt of this! 'T is not against *thee*, so much, as against *me*, that Jacques has aimed this blow! Canst not thou see *that*, eh?"

Though naturally shrewd, very shrewd—especially in cases involving his own interests—the notary had *not* seen the matter in the same light; but now that the Lieutenant of Police assisted his understanding to his own spectacles as it were, he at once perceived a great deal of truth—setting aside conscience, of course, that being professional—in the view that functionary had taken of the case; wondering much, how such a legal loophool could exist without his having put his head through it: he could account for the oversight, only by attributing it to the state of trepidation and excitement, into which the sudden loss of so much money had thrown him; for—considering his vast experience in quibbling—he could not but for that circumstance having, at the time, literally hoodwinked his judgment—he felt certain he could not, have blundered over a point so very much in favour of his neck; he therefore felt quite obliged to Monsieur D'Argenson, for his able exposition of Jacques' motives, and concurred with his opinion in every particular.

"I do see it all now, Monseigneur," said he, holding his head up at least an inch higher; "but that is only one reason the more why you should put him at once out of the way."

"*I* am not afraid of hanging, Sieur Notaire," replied D'Argenson, with a hideous chuckle that sounded like the death-rattle; "why, Monsieur de Paris would think it sacrilege to lay even a finger on me; *tonnerre dieu!* No! no! the forgery of that will, will never come home to thee, or to me—unless we should quarrel, Maitre Quinault; which I think thou would'st rather not do, eh, Etienne?"

"Certainly not, Monseigneur," replied the latter, flattered by the cordiality of his friend, nor less by the condescending manner in which he placed a hand upon his arm; "we can do much, united, especially if the post of First Judge of the Cour Royale—"

"Ah! yes! I promised thee that, Quinault: I saw Chamillard this morning, and although we are not friends, he has consented to thy nomination."

This was good news! glorious news! Quinault could fain have fallen down and worshipped D'Argenson's feet; he did not however

get lower than his hand, which he took within his own, and squeezed in the most fraternal manner possible, growing more into importance every time he spoke.

"What ought I to do for such a distinguished mark of esteem, friend D'Argenson?" said he; "how return such a service?"

"Why! didst not thou buy it for a forged signature," observed the Lieutenant of Police, freeing himself from the grasp of the notary; "I have only performed my share of our bargain, nor do I—at present—want thee to add any more to thine! I am not sorry matters have taken this turn; I must only alter my plans, that's all."

"What are your intentions with regard to the Baron de St. Auney, Monseigneur? Do you think he has had a hand in this bond?"

"I will forfeit this right hand, Sieur Quinault, if he is not ignorant of the whole proceeding! *Mort dieu!* The Baron do a dishonorable action! No! no! I know him better than that. Had he been less honest, he should not have baffled me so long! But I am sore puzzled to comprehend why this man Jacques has taken up arms in his cause? I thought him friendless!"

"You could at once render him so," again suggested Maitre Quinault, edging towards the Lieutenant of Police: "imprison Jacques, and—"

"*Sang dieu!* no! I will not!" exclaimed the latter, fiercely; "I tell thee I need Jacques' services. He is invaluable: a man of extraordinary sagacity, and apt at intrigue. He is playing some deep game with me, but—" the sentence remained unfinished—at least as far as verbal expression went, for the glance which the speaker cast upon his companion plainly said—'I am more than a match for him.' "No, no!" he continued, musingly; "I have not yet done with Jacques."

"It was a mere suggestion, Monseigneur," observed the notary, perceiving that D'Argenson was firm; "evidently he is in league with the Baron, or he would not have paid—no, not paid—I mean that he would not have extorted—"

"Nay, nay! *paid* is the word, Sieur Notaire; thou hast given up the bonds and a full receipt for their amount; so paid is the word, *morbleu!* I shall look to thee for the sixty-five thousand crowns!"

"But, Monseigneur! I have not received a single crown of the sum! a crown, said I, not a livre—not a sol."

"What is that to me, Maitre Quinault? By thine own shewing, the Baron, or at least his representative, holds thy receipt for the sum he owed upon those bonds; the conveyance of the debt to me was fair, was it not?"

"I cannot deny it, Monseigneur," stammered the notary, in reply.

"Then either give me back the bonds, or give me the money, Maitre Quinault! *Ventre bleu!* 'T is a sum I can find good use for!"

"But, Monseigneur," remonstrated the disconcerted notary, "consider the circumstances! Have some regard for friendship—remember that I have received no consideration—"

"And the bond, then, Sieur Notaire! dost reckon that for nothing?"

"Nay, Monseigneur; the security is doubtful at best."

"One reason the more why I should have thy money," retorted D'Argenson; "so make up thy mind to pay it to me when I require it: as for the security thou holdest, 'tis no affair of mine."

"What is Monseigneur's opinion upon it?" asked the notary.

"'Tis a forgery," answered his friend; "no doubt of it. A mere trick to extort money from thee, and save the baron."

"Then," resumed the former, "my first act as Judge of the Cour Royale, shall be to command Jacques' apprehension."

"Not so fast, Maitre Quinault; how wilt thou *prove* the forgery? thou didst not see him commit it! Besides, thou should'st have objected to the bond before thou didst advance the money; but having accepted the security, thou must await the issue"

"I thought it might afford a clue to the object you sought, Monseigneur; there are not many such names."

"A trick I tell thee; a mere trick, friend Etienne. A deep fellow is Jacques; ah! ah! ah! I like him all the better for that; *sang dieu!* I could not have done it more cleverly, myself; ah! ah! ah!"

If this jest had been perpetrated at the spy's expense, most likely the notary would have relished it vastly, but as it was literally at his own, he did not—contrary to the established rules of toad-eating—follow his patron's example, and chuckle, and rub his hands, and torture his pinched-up features for a smile—but made an effort to conceal his mortification by a judicious appeal to his snuff-box, prolonging the operation consequent thereupon, until D'Argenson's indecorous mirth had expended itself. But even then he felt at a loss for a remark by which to renew the colloquy, and stared at the flame of the lamp, as if his ideas were fluttering about it, like so many moths—whilst his companion, apparently wrapt up in his own private reflections, did not seem at all anxious to break the long silence that ensued. At length, however, the latter abruptly exclaimed:

"Hast thou the bond with thee?"

"I have," was the brief response.

"Let me look at it, Maitre Quinault."

The notary handed him the parchment, which the Lieutenant of Police, having minutely inspected, returned, saying:

"A mere trick! a forgery! a trick, Maitre Quinault! But keep thine own counsel on this matter, and leave the rest to me."

"Could you not take sixty thousand crowns, Monseigneur?" observed the notary, after a pause, and with a most rueful expression; "the remaining five thousand are bare interest for a twelvemonth; upon such questionable security too!"

"Not a livre less than the whole sum," replied the Lieutenant of Police, turning over the leaves of the great folio before him.

There was another pause, when the last speaker looked up once more at his companion, and again addressed him:

"I wish to be alone, friend Etienne; a good evening to thee!"

The old man bowed and moved slowly towards the door, evidently reluctant to leave the apartment without another attempt upon the generosity of his patron: he fumbled at the lock a moment, and turning half round, said—with a whine that would have been a fortune to a mumper—

"Say sixty thousand, Monseigneur; I will agree to pay the remainder when the bond expires, even though I should not—"

He did not finish the sentence, for striking his clenched fist upon the table with a force that caused the huge book to rebound, D'Argenson cried:

"No! no! *sang dieu!* Did I not tell thee so before! Leave me! I wish to be alone!"

"There's nothing lost by trying," muttered Maitre Quinault to himself, as, after effecting a precipitate retreat, he groped his way out into the street: "but perhaps my turn will come next, and then—" he did not say what—no doubt it was something very desperate, for he struck his cane very hard upon the foot-way, and was so intent upon picturing to himself, what he would do when his turn did come, that, without observing him, he brushed past the individual who had first watched him into the Lieutenant's cabinet, and remained hard by in a door-way, on purpose to watch him out again.

When the virtuous notary was fairly out of sight, the man emerged from his hiding-place, and made the best of his way into the cabinet of D'Argenson, who started a little on his entrance, and hurriedly exclaimed:

"Thou here, Sieur Jacques!"

"Ten was the hour appointed, Monseigneur," answered that individual, with a vast amount of coolness.

"Ten! is it ten, already Jacques? Hum! I did not think it. Well! what news? hast thou discovered anything more? Hast thou seen the Capuchin again?"

"I watched him into Monsieur Chamillard's hôtel, Monseigneur; and have ascertained that the stranger comes from Madrid."

"Madrid!" muttered D'Argenson, entering the remark in his book; "Madrid, eh! there is something beneath that, Jacques! He is some political emissary in disguise!"

The spy made no answer, but looked as if he knew a little more than his employer, only did not think proper to let him deeper into the secret.

"We must inquire into this affair," resumed the Lieutenant of Police; "we must discover what brings him to Paris! Set about it quickly, Jacques, and let me know the result. If Chamillard and de Maintenon have set any intrigue on foot—*tonnerre dieu!* I will foil them! I can depend upon *thee*, eh, Jacques?"

The spy bowed.

"Good, good! here are twenty louis, for the information thou hast already brought me. 'Tis a large sum, but I would have thee know I can reward, handsomely."

Jacques deposited the money in his pocket, but still observed silence.

"I hear there is much discontent amongst the people, Jacques," remarked D'Argenson, after a pause; "hast thou heard or perceived any thing of the sort?"

"I have, Monseigneur," replied the spy, sternly.

"Hast thou learnt the cause?" asked the Lieutenant of Police.

"There are many causes, Monseigneur," responded Jacques, elevating his voice; "heavy imposts—low wages—dear food—scarcity of employment—unequal laws—an over-bearing clergy—an oppressive aristocracy—"

"Bah!" ejaculated D'Argenson, impatiently: "it was the same, years ago."

"And may be, for years to come, Monseigneur; but it will have an end: the people—"

"The people!" reiterated the Lieutenant of Police contemptuously; "the people indeed! Bah!"

"You may affect to despise the people, Monseigneur; but beware how you trample on their feelings—"

"Bah!" again ejaculated the former, apparently endeavouring to divest himself of the idea that this portion of the community possessed such a commodity; "the scum!"

"Hold, Monseigneur!" exclaimed the spy, glowing with anger; "I am *one* of the people; I am sprung from that very *scum*, and will not hear it debased in silence."

"This to *me*, Sieur Jacques!" observed D'Argenson, astounded at that individual's boldness.

"Why *not* to thee?" resumed the latter with animation; "would'st thou deny me freedom of thought and speech? I have only told thee truth! It is perhaps unwelcome, Monseigneur; but 'tis truth notwithstanding."

And no one, to look at D'Argenson, could doubt but that the truth *was* unwelcome; the spy's manner and tone were likewise offensive, for Jacques, whilst addressing him, had dropped the deferential '*you*,' substituting the '*thee and thou*' of equality—a liberty of speech which sorely militated against the prejudices he had early imbibed, and which the usages of a self-sufficient court had nurtured: prejudices, be it said, common to the arrogant nobility of the period, and whose tendency was to debase the class—conventionally styled *vulgar*—by the factitious elevation of the gentle-born, thus establishing a wider barrier than Nature—common mother of all—ever intended should exist between the elder and the younger branches of her great family.

The Lieutenant of Police strove to conceal his displeasure at being thus lowered to the same grade as his agent, but could not altogether succeed. He, a patrician of Venice*—a knight of St. Marc—a noble

* He was called "Marc," after the patron of the Venetian Republic, which stood sponsor to him.

of France—the most powerful Minister of the Grand Monarque—he to be '*theed and thoud*' by one of the common herd! a servant in his own employ! and what an employ! Had Jacques not been constitutionally basilisk-proof, he must have fallen annihilated beneath the gaze of his employer, who, bending it full upon him, appeared to concentrate therein all the malignity of his nature, in order the more readily to void it at him through that outlet.

"I have known the truth prove a sure passport to the Bastile, Sieur Jacques," said he; "*mort dieu!* We *have* arrived at something indeed."

"'Tis quite a matter of taste," retorted that unimpressionable individual; "the Bastile, where one may speak the truth, to walls that can't *hear* it—or liberty, without the privilege of speaking it at all—or only to those that *won't*. I don't think there's a pin to choose."

This was said with an air intended to imply an opinion, on the part of the speaker, that the turn of the scale, if any, was rather in favor of the Bastile, and his conviction that it was a very comfortable sort of place, of which he was perfectly ready to become an inmate, if it would at all accommodate the views of the functionary in whose presence he stood. Not that he felt any real desire that way—but he knew that by assuming an indifference to the fate with which he was indirectly menaced, it would have the effect of rendering his employer equally lukewarm to inflict it—a line of policy, whose efficacy he had tested on several critical occasions.

The theory propounded by Jacques, startled D'Argenson, not less than his tacit defiance of a power which he wielded to the terror of all classes—from the haughty noble of the magnificent court, down to the lowest citizen of that heterogeneous capital—and which, on account of its peculiar character, and secret influence, invested him with an authority far more despotic, than that of the Grand Monarque himself, whose very will even, he could at pleasure counteract. Still, although thus offended, he could not but admire—inwardly it is true, but even that was something, for it proved that the spark of generosity was not quite extinct—the spy's boldness, and independence of spirit—qualities that he himself possessed in an eminent degree, but which experience had taught him the utility of controlling, and a selfish policy rendered subservient to the full gratification of the two master-passions of his heart—avarice and ambition. But these did not constitute the emissary's only claims to his consideration: his extraordinary sagacity—his activity—his untiring energy—his determination, and courage, besides his singular aptitude for the calling he exercised, had often proved incalculably serviceable, and consequently carried their full weight; and although more than once, as on the present occasion, his severe rebukes and sarcasms, were nearly provoking him to punish the offender, still, in consideration of his great utility, he had refrained from adopting this course; the more so, that he never had reason to suspect his fidelity, until now, when the un-

expected disclosures of Maitre Quinault opened his eyes to the fact of Jacques being leagued with the Baron de St. Auney, and thus to a certain extent, against himself also.

But whatever were the feelings of D'Argenson, on this latter score —and that they were bitter enough, the sequel will prove—he was too cunning to allow Jacques to perceive what passed within his mind —though even something of that might have been gathered by watching the convulsive twitchings of his mouth and eye-brows—and for the present confined himself to remarking, in answer to the spy's last observation, that, 'perhaps experience might teach him better.'

To this the spy retorted only by an expressive shrug of the shoulders.

"Well, well, Maitre Jacques," continued D'Argenson, "we differ both in taste and political creed; but I would caution thee not to make open confession of thine."

"I have, Monseigneur; and do. I would not conceal my opinions, even from His Most Christian Majesty."

"Maitre Jacques, thou art going too far," resumed D'Argenson, very rapidly noting the spy's words; "thou must keep that democratic spirit within bounds, or the worst of punishments, short of hanging, will ultimately be thine."

"And what may that be?" asked the spy, with an ironical smile.

"The Bastile, Sieur Jacques, the Bastile; *sang dieu!*"

"It has no terrors for me, Monseigneur; I have nothing to lose. By the worst of punishments, I thought something even worse was in store for me!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the Lieutenant of Police; "*worse* than that? worse than hanging, or than the Bastile! Worse than the Bastile, Maitre Jacques? *ventre bleu!*"

"Worse than either, Monseigneur; worse than the one first, and the other after."

"Ah!" again ejaculated the other, in a tone that expressed great doubt as to there existing any thing worse, and great curiosity to be made acquainted with the secret, in order, when the opportunity offered, of favoring Jacques with the benefit of his own discovery: this, of course, was a private resolution.

"Well, Monseigneur; I know of two punishments, that to an honest man, are worse than either hanging or the Bastile.' He paused.

"Name them! name them!" exclaimed D'Argenson, impatiently.

"The first, Monseigneur, is the being an honest man, and in the pay of His Most Christian Majesty's Lieutenant of Police! The second—" again he paused.

"Well, Sieur Jacques," observed D'Argenson, growing pale: "and the second?"

"Is the being His Most Christian Majesty's Lieutenant of Police," retorted Jacques, bowing; and gathering his large cloak about him,

slowly quitted the apartment, leaving his disconcerted employer foaming with indignation.

"This is too much," exclaimed the latter, as soon as he could command his feelings sufficiently to give them utterance; "but it will be *my* turn next. Thou shalt not beard me with impunity; *tonnerre dieu!* Let us reflect; let us reflect;" continued he, speaking to himself; "'tis time I should act! yes! yes! I'll not trust thee any longer, Maitre Jacques: thou art growing troublesome! in league too with the baron! oh! I have not done with thee, yet! but—we must wait—we must wait! The Bastile is not bad enough for thee, eh? nor hanging! ah! ah! ah! thou art difficult to please, *sang dieu!* but I have not done with thee yet!" and easing his mind, at intervals, with such exclamations as these, D'Argenson resumed his labours, nor ceased them, until long past the hour of midnight.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOW JULIE FARED IN THE BASTILE; AND HOW ST. MARC AND CORBÉ COMPORTED THEMSELVES TOWARDS HER.

Leaving D'Argenson to brood over his plans of vengeance against Jacques and the Baron de St. Auney, let us return to the fair prisoner of the Bastile.

On recovering from the swoon into which she fell, upon her father's departure, she found herself in the chamber of Sister Bridget—situated in a remote part of the prison—the matron, to whose care she had been confided—assiduously engaged in applying to her nose and temples, the contents of a vinegar-bottle, for the purpose of restoring her to consciousness.

"'T is all over now," exclaimed the latter; "you will be quite well in a few minutes. I'm sure, I thought I never should have got you *to!* Oh, dear!"

"Is he really gone?" asked Julie, as the remembrance of the late scene recurred to her; "am I really left here alone!" and her sobs returned, much to the alarm of the matron, who began to apprehend that the vinegar-bottle would once more come into requisition.

"Don't take on so, my good young lady," observed she; "'t is very hard, I dare say, to be separated from one's friends; but you'll soon be used to the place; and besides, as I *must* be with you, now, you won't feel so very dull."

It was some consolation to the maiden, to know that she should have a companion—an indulgence, which the interest of her father's powerful persecutor had been instrumental in obtaining—although Sister Bridget's last observation led her to conclude, that in becoming the partner of her solitude, she yielded less to her own sympathy than to the will of her stern superiors.

"We are going to put your new apartment to rights," resumed she, after a pause: "'tis the one over that in which you slept last night: the prisoner has been liberated to-day."

"My father!" sobbed Julie.

"Oh; *was* it!" observed the matron; "the people about are so close, one never knows what's going forward. Your father, was it, Mademoiselle? Poor gentleman! I'm afraid he had a sad time of it the first week. Ru told me something about his refusing his food; but he did not interest me then, and so I did'nt ask any questions."

Julie's tears fell very fast as she listened to this recital, and for some time she remained silent, whilst Sister Bridget employed herself in making up a vast number of mysterious little bundles, all of which were carefully set aside ready to be carried away: having completed these arrangements, she once more addressed Julie.

"I suppose, Mademoiselle, you did not come provided, did you? But that's of no consequence: I can furnish you with every thing you want in the shape of linen; though to be sure I must do it out of my own stock."

"I will endeavour to repay your kindness, good dame," observed the maiden; "that is, as far as the money I have at my disposal will allow me."

"Oh, don't talk about paying me, my dear, good young lady," resumed Sister Bridget, brightening up at the prospect of the golden harvest before her; "I would do any thing in the world to make things as agreeable as I can, only for the pleasure of doing it: but, of course, I would'nt refuse any little present—just for my attendance—any thing that way, certainly; but not for being kind; oh dear! no!" and the matron appeared quite shocked at the idea.

Julie gave her two *louis*, notwithstanding, nor did the latter appear at all affronted: rather the contrary; indeed it was astonishing the sudden effect which the knowledge she had obtained of the state of her fair prisoner's finances, produced upon her sensitive heart: such anxiety to perform the trifling offices which she could perceive her charge had been accustomed to—such an overflow of condolements—it must have taken her at least ten years to amass such a stock of benevolence as she all at once appeared to have on hand—and judging by the volubility with which she expressed it, one might have safely sworn she had been tongue-tied all the while, and now spoke at the rate of ten people at once, in order to make up for lost time.

"I am much obliged to you, Bridget—" observed Julie, as soon as she found an opportunity of slipping in a word—"but I hope that I shall not long trouble you; I dare say my father will succeed in obtaining my release, within a very few days."

Bridget did not say any thing in reply: but looked as though *she* did not feel quite so sanguine on that score.

"You observed, just now, dame," remarked Julie again, "that you *must now* be with me: what am I to understand by this? are you compelled to remain, whether you like it or not?"

"Why, Mademoiselle, we are not our own masters, here, or perhaps things might be a little more pleasant; but the truth is, that as long as you remain, I must keep you company: it is the rule of the *chdteau*."

"Then does every person who is confined here, have some one for company, dame!"

"On the contrary, Mademoiselle; very few do: only the favoured ones! then if the cells are too full, and two prisoners are lodged together, they are never separated afterwards; which makes it very cheerful for them. Of course you won't repeat what I tell you Mademoiselle."

"If I did, dame, there would not be any harm in it."

"Oh, but the Governor would make harm of it; and then I should be shut up for, Heaven knows how long, in one of those horrid places below! ugh!"

There was no affectation of horror in the shudder which followed the matron's allusion to the dungeons of the ditch—a shudder which produced its effect upon Julie, who promised, even if interrogated, to observe strict silence with regard to any conversation she might have with her companion, whilst the latter, re-assured on this score, became more loquacious than ever, and changing the conversation, communicated a great many facts, bearing upon her own private history, with a view to excite a feeling of reciprocity in her young companion, and thus arrive at the why and the wherefore of her incarceration.

Having no reasons for concealing the story of her troubles, Julie confided them to Sister Bridget, omitting, however, to mention D'Argenson's name in connection with her father's affairs, but giving her to understand that she remained as an hostage for his return.

Sister Bridget might have been born with a turn for thinking, or acquired the habit thereof since she commenced her duties in the Bastile—seeing that there existed no law against it—but whether natural or acquired, certain it is that she remained buried in meditation for some time after Julie came to an end. The tale made a deep impression upon her—that was evident—the very white cap and very white plaited border upon it seemed aware of the fact, and that the head they enfolded was hard at work, attempting to discover something more at the bottom, than floated on the surface: and a very deep bottom it must have been for Bridget not to be able to reach

it—or why did she, with all her womanly shrewdness, shake her head, as though compelled to give it up as a bad job? perhaps she found more than she expected—and that set her hard at thinking again, for the very white cap and its very white plaited border appeared to cling closer than ever about her face and head, apparently determined not to know any thing of what was going on in the brain beneath, lest their proprietress, suspecting the fact, should consign them to the flames for meddling with what did not concern them.*

"May I ask to be made acquainted with your thoughts, dame?" remarked Julie, observing, with some uneasiness, the matron's silence and the ominous shakings of the head by which it was occasionally diversified.

"'Tis a very singular story," replied she; "very; and I can't make it out! Monseigneur d'Orleans—the Lieutenant of Police—and that man Jacques! all in it! I can't make it out!" and as though she did not wish Julie to perceive the disagreeable impression she had conceived, the matron took refuge in a large cupboard, whence, after a loud gingling of glasses and the rattling of bottles, she shortly emerged, bearing in her hand, a small, but apparently well-filled basket, which she placed, side by side, with the mysterious little bundles, and quitted the apartment, with an intimation that she would return ere long.

After a lapse of two hours she again made her appearance, accompanied by Ru, who loading himself with the little bundles and the small basket—about the safety of whose contents the dame appeared very solicitous—made the best of his way to the chamber lately occupied by the Baron, whither he was closely followed by Sister Bridget and her fair prisoner.

"Here we are, installed!" observed the former, as they entered, looking around her with admiration; "we shall be as gay as larks, and as happy as the day—"

As the matron did not specify *the* particular day whose happiness was to form the standing model of their's, she perhaps intended it to be inferred, that she alluded to a certain very happy day connected with her former unwidowed condition, or—as whilst she spoke, she bestowed a very peculiar glance upon Ru—to some forthcoming happy day, towards the felicity of which he was expected to become a joint contributor.

"I'm sure," continued she, "'tis quite a little palace—fit for a queen to live in."

Although Sister Bridget's notions of the aggregate amount of domestic luxuries that befit a queen, were necessarily rather limited—

* That cunning and avaricious monarch, Louis Onze—so remarkable moreover for the secrecy of his actions—used to say, that if he thought his hat knew what was passing in his head, he would burn it—though it should cost him a new one every hour.

inasmuch as she never could have had an opportunity of acquiring so peculiar a piece of information—still, as far as actual necessaries went, perhaps her assertion was correct, as there is not any reasonable argument to prove why so exalted a personage could not at any time, if so inclined, entirely dispense with the former, or as well as any other body, do uncommonly well with the latter: Sister Bridget was therefore right in asserting that the chamber *was* fit for a queen—provided always that she confined herself to necessaries.

Since the Baron's departure, Ru had not lost time: in the first place, by dint of great exertion he succeeded in removing a layer—two inches thick—of solid dirt, that had for years been encrusting upon the floor; having discovered which, he laid over it a piece of matting, sufficient to nearly cover three-fourths thereof, filling up the vacancy around, with a coating of clean sand: the walls next underwent a process of cleansing they had long remained strangers to, and the flue of the chimney was explored and cleared of its mass of soot, so that the smoke was not positively compelled to make its exit through the door; this done, Sister Bridget's talent for domestic arrangement, came into full play; and it must be confessed she understood something about the matter, executing to the very letter, the commands of Monseigneur D'Argenson, to the effect that the young lady should have every thing necessary to her comfort: it is not certain, however, that she would have been so extremely punctilious in this respect, but for her knowledge of one circumstance—a circumstance of first-rate importance—namely, that *she* was to share the dungeon of the prisoner—thus, it behoved her to increase the comforts of the latter, as a means of securing a larger proportion of the same to herself; and as she had previously expressed her willingness to do anything in the world to make things as agreeable as possible to any person who might be confided to her care, it is only a natural inference that she did a very great deal more, to render things as agreeable as possible to herself.

Considering that she was deprived of her liberty, Julie's position was as tolerable as it could well be; nor did her spirits suffer so much, at first, as might have been anticipated; for Sister Bridget—entertaining no fear of being betrayed—gave full scope to the conversational powers with which Nature had liberally endowed her, and which, though they were chiefly engrossed by trifles, served to beguile the weary hours.

Although prohibited from verbal communication with the exterior, St. Marc intimated to Julie that she would be permitted to correspond with her friends—a boon of which she gladly availed herself, and accordingly penned a letter to her sister, informing her that she was well—wanted for nothing save the pleasure of embracing her—and hoping that her father would speedily settle his affairs and fetch her away. But this first epistle remaining unanswered—a second was dispatched, with complaints; this met with no more attention

than the former; still, a third and a fourth were sent, but with the same result: and for a very good reason; since the said letters were no sooner entrusted to Sister Bridget for delivery to the proper officer, than the latter transmitted them, without loss of time, to St. Marc, who in turn forwarded them to D'Argenson, who opened them, ascertained their contents, and burnt them.

A similar system of confiscation was carried on with respect to the epistles which the Baron and Jeanne daily sent to Julie under cover to St. Marc; and these were the most interesting to the Lieutenant of Police, who through their medium became acquainted with the proceedings of his unsuspecting victims, without the practicability of their discovering the cheat, although each party remained equally at a loss to ascribe a reason for the silence of the other. At length, Julie expressed her doubts to Sister Bridget, who then, and apparently for the first time, became aware of the possibility of letters being intercepted, but, to ensure their safe delivery in future, volunteered to enlist Ru into their service, who she was sure would do anything she wished, provided, of course, that Mademoiselle made it worth his while to run a little risk. To this plan Julie eagerly consented, and having written another letter, wherein she gave a detailed account of everything that had occurred to her since her abduction—of her treatment—her jailers—the impression she had conceived of the Duke of Chartres and of the other personages—her suspicions respecting the interception of her letters—the plan she and Sister Bridget had adopted to baffle the treachery of the higher functionaries of the Bastile—omitting nothing in fact—the epistle was placed into the hands of Ru, together with a handsome bribe, and Ru, *for Bridget's sake*, readily agreed to serve the young lady's interest; putting his own out of the question—of course.

Amongst other indulgencies, Julie was next permitted to walk out, twice a day, either upon the platform at the top of the towers, or upon the bastion of the fortress, but on such occasions was always accompanied by the Governor or his nephew—more frequently by the latter; indeed, he appeared extremely solicitous to ingratiate himself into the maiden's good graces, often prolonging the time usually granted to *the airing of* prisoners—namely, an hour—expressly to afford him opportunities of conversing with her. Julie, however, shrunk from his approach, and would gladly have declined the privilege accorded her, rather than be constrained to enjoy it in such company; but Sister Bridget informed her, that as the Governor and his nephew acted under orders, they would, if she refused, be compelled to enforce her compliance: thus was the enjoyment of even partial liberty rendered irksome, to those who most sighed after it.

But not Corbé's company only, offended Julie—although that of itself was sufficiently repugnant to her feelings—his attentions became of a nature to alarm her delicacy, for whilst affecting to pay her the greatest deference, he would address compliments to her, which,

under any other circumstances, she could not have listened to without indignation—but now found herself constrained to hear with dignified silence.

On one occasion, during the temporary absence of Sister Bridget, he entered her apartment accompanied by a second personage, whom he introduced as the chaplain of the establishment, and then withdrew, leaving her alone with the "holy man."

Father Riquelet was a short, heavy-made personage, with a plump, sleek aspect, and a large, round head, which—Nature having performed the tonsorial office upon it very effectually—looked like an over-grown orange that had been rubbed very hard, until it shone again. He had very small eyes—and these were very black—very deeply sunken in their sockets—and very piercing, possessing besides a sinister expression, indicative of great cunning and treachery. In manners he was soft and smooth—with a trick of putting his palms together, and of bowing his head, as though always in the act of prayer; in a word, Father Riquelet was a Jesuit—subtle and designing by nature—oily in speech and in look—with an outward man bearing ample evidence, that although he might occasionally mortify the spirit, he knew well how to take care of the flesh.

The object of his visit, he observed, with great show of humility, was to offer his daughter the consolations of religion: it was customary, he continued, for the prisoners to hear mass in the chapel, by turns, but as she was not regarded exactly in that light, the formality had been dispensed with hitherto; yet it was his holy duty to exhort her to observe the rules of the church of which she was a member, and he would, therefore, wait upon her every morning, and read her a homily.

Julie gladly assented to the saintly man's proposition, and already looked up to Father Riquelet as she was wont to do, to Father Anselm, the family confessor—the poor child even wept as she listened to the holy man's consoling words, nor shrunk from the fatherly kiss which he imprinted upon her brow, after patting her head and invoking a blessing upon it.

Considering that he was only discharging a part of his religious duties in saluting the maiden, it appeared singular he should start back so hurriedly on seeing Sister Bridget enter the chamber—but start he did, and grew confused, and slunk away out of her presence, as though he felt conscious of having been detected in the commission of some crime.

His visits, however, were subsequently repeated—always, be it added, during the absence of Sister Bridget, whom he appeared to avoid—but Julie experienced no uneasiness at being alone with the reverend father, although his paternal salutation became every day more cordial.

There was, however, a secret sorrow, which preyed upon the maiden's heart, blighted the rose upon her cheek, and dimmed the lustre of her eye! In the long, dark hours of the night, her thoughts

dwelt upon the idol enshrined in her bosom! bright visions of happiness would flit before her, which, in another moment, resolved themselves again into the darkness whence they came. Still his image remained ever present—waking she cherished it—sleeping she held communion with it—if she wept, it was not because she doubted him—but because her love overflowed, and could find no other issue.

She was not without entertaining fears for the safety of her lover, when she remembered the scene in the Council Chamber, and the tone of the Duke of Chartres, on learning that the ring had been St. Leu's gift to her, but looked forward to her liberation, as the means of resolving the mystery that appeared to enshroud the whole transaction. She was at first sanguine as to the result of the Duke's interference on behalf of her father, but as day after day wore away, and she received no intelligence either from him or from her sister, her spirits began to droop, notwithstanding Sister Bridget's attempts to revive them.

Matters had reached this crisis, when about noon-tide one morning, St. Marc and Corbé entered her apartment, the former of whom, after a few preliminary remarks, observed that he had been commissioned by Monseigneur D'Argenson to inform her, that her father and sister were well—a mark of favour that it was unusual to show to a prisoner, and which she ought to regard as an especial distinction.

"I am much obliged to Monseigneur," answered Julie, sobbing, "but has there been no letter for me?"

St. Marc shook his head.

"Is there any thing you wish for, Mademoiselle?" asked Corbé, with an attempt to smile good-naturedly; "if there is, you have only to speak!"

"Save my liberty, and the society of those I love," replied Julie, "I have every thing I desire."

"It is Monseigneur D'Argenson's wish," chimed in St. Marc, "that it should be so; he also desires that we should do all we can to amuse you; so we have come to show you over the fortress."

Julie received this announcement with a shudder, exclaiming:

"Oh! no! no! I have seen quite enough of it—I would rather remain here with Sister Bridget."

"But you can't remain here with Sister Bridget," growled the Governor, "when my orders are to shew you the fortress."

"Orders!" ejaculated the trembling maiden; "surely if I decline accompanying you, you would not be rude enough to compel me!"

"It would be very disagreeable to do that, to be sure," observed Corbé, with a look that seemed to say he should find a pleasure in doing it notwithstanding—"very disagreeable; but—Monseigneur must be obeyed."

"And what, in Heaven's name, can be Monseigneur's motives,"

asked Julie haughtily, "for commanding me to be dragged over the horrible dens of this *château ?*"

"We never inquire into motives," retorted the Governor, surlily; "we only look to orders; if they are properly authorized, all we have to do is to obey them."

"I'll go with you, Mademoiselle," said Sister Bridget, wiping her eyes with a loose end of her tucker; "that is, if *Monsieur le Gouverneur* will allow me."

"*Monsieur le Gouverneur* won't allow you then," answered that individual, with a most ferocious grin; "keep thy tongue quiet, or I'll gag thee, and put thee into the cage; beldam! Are you ready, Mademoiselle?"

This last sentence was addressed to Julie, who finding that remonstrances would prove unavailing with so hardened a monster, summoned all her resolution, and followed her jailers with trembling steps, until they reached the basement story, when Corbé exclaimed:

"We'll take her into the dungeon first? I'll fetch a torch."

Whilst he was absent, Julie made another attempt to move the Governor, but he turned a deaf ear to her entreaties, not even deigning a reply.

"Now," observed Corbé, opening the heavy door, "I'll go down first. You follow me, Mademoiselle."

In this order, St. Marc bringing up the rear, they descended into the living tomb beneath the foul structure whose walls enclosed them: the noisome exhalation, even now, struck like the dew of death upon the face of the maiden, who could scarcely maintain her firmness, and clung for support to the slimy walls on each side of her.

"You slept in the chamber above this dungeon," remarked Corbé to Julie, as he unlocked the door, "the first night you came. This is the dungeon of the ditch of the Bertaudière tower."

So saying he pushed open a small square door, which opened inwards, and stepped down into the dungeon, beckoning to Julie to follow.

"Oh! no! Pray do not insist upon my coming any further," ejaculated she, with agony; "I have seen quite enough, indeed."

"Go on!" growled a voice in the rear: she looked round and beheld the hideous Governor urging her to advance: she obeyed, and followed Corbé to the threshold of the den.

It was an arched vault, about twelve feet square, reeking with mephitic vapours, with only the smallest possible aperture to admit air; the stones under foot were covered with a layer of slime, half an inch thick: the walls too, dripped with moisture, and large unsightly masses of fungii grew from them, luxuriating in the unwholesome atmosphere, and mingling with it, their own pestilential breath.

"He's only been here twenty-five years," observed Corbé, elevating his torch, and pointing with his finger to a certain part of the dungeon.

"Who?" ejaculated Julie, in a scarcely audible voice; "no one can live here."

"*He* does," again remarked Corbé; "look yonder!"

Impelled by a feeling she could not resist, the affrighted girl followed the direction of her guide's hand, but no sooner beheld the spectacle that presented itself, than she uttered a suppressed scream of horror that ought to have touched the Governor's heart—had he possessed one—and covering her face with her hands, attempted to re-ascend the stairs leading from the dungeon.

"Go on further," exclaimed St. Marc, barring her egress; "he won't hurt thee."

There was no alternative, for he advanced to the door of the den, and effectually closed the passage against her.

The light from Corbé's torch fell full upon an object—human in form—that sat huddled up, all of a heap, propping up his face with his hands, in a remote corner of the den; two planks, placed transversely across a couple of iron bars cemented into the wall, served him for a bed: a litter of straw, wet and rotten, for a pillow; an old rug, for covering; his feet and legs were bare, as likewise his arms, whilst the remainder of his body was enveloped in a coarse blanket that scarcely served the purpose for which it was intended.

He was an old man—with grey hair, which hung over his shoulders in long matted shocks, and his beard had grown to such a prodigious length, that as he sat, it reached the ground. His eyes were hollow, but bright—although nearly concealed by the shaggy brows above them—and remained fixed in one direction, notwithstanding the attempt Corbé made to attract his notice, by waving the torch so as to cast its light upon him.

By his side stood a pitcher, and a lump of bread, on which a troop of rats had just been feasting, for two or three still remained, in spite of the Governor, who in vain tried to scare them by stamping his foot, and striking his cane upon the ground. Had he known they were the prisoner's daily companions—that he had accustomed to feed from his hand—he would have killed them outright—but he did not, and so they burrowed in the straw beneath their master.

The feeling now uppermost in Julie's breast, was compassion, not horror; she could even bear to look at that unfortunate, and the large tears fell from her eyes as she gazed upon his emaciated form.

"You may speak to him," said St. Marc; "he won't understand you; he has not spoken to any body for years: besides; he's mad."

The man looked round, and his unearthly eyes flashed fire, but that was all the notice he took of the group, until Julie, stepping forward, addressed him:

"May God in his mercy," said she, "forgive thy persecutors, and soon call thee to his bosom! This shall be my prayer for thee."

The man listened to the gentle tones that fell upon his ear, and two large tears rolled down his cheek; he heaved a deep sigh, muttering in a voice that was awfully distinct, at the same time bending his gaze full upon Julie.

"Heaven then, has come at last! Oh! I have prayed for it night and day! no! all night—there's no day here! Sweet angel! God's messenger! Back, back! Don't come nearer! I am of earth! thou art of Heaven! a spirit from Paradise; Ah! ah! ah! they thought to keep me here for ever! but I prayed to die! and Heaven has come at last! Twenty-five years! But I have not forgotten it! They want to kill me, but I won't die! I have something yet to tell! Oh! oh! a tale of blood! my poor master! But I know where they buried him! Yes! Old Jacques Morin knows! ha! ha! ha!

The state of surprise into which this unexpected speech threw both St. Marc and Corbé, was probably the reason that neither attempted to stop him; but perceiving that he was likely to make some awkward disclosures, the Governor took Julie by the arm, and pushed her out of the dungeon, leaving Corbé to close the door upon the old man, who was still muttering when they quitted his presence.

They found Sister Bridget at the outer door leading into the great inner court. As soon as Julie saw her, she fell upon her neck, and overcome by the foulness of the atmosphere below, nearly fainted: a flood of tears came to her relief; to revive her, the matron led her into the court, the Governor and his nephew remaining in the door-way, deep in mysterious conference.

At this moment, an officer approached to inform St. Marc that the prisoner they expected had arrived, pointing to a file of soldiers that now made its appearance, guarding a young officer of musketeers: the party drew nearer; there was a loud shriek; the young man suddenly bounded from the midst of the guard, and in another moment clasped Julie to his throbbing bosom. Scarcely however had St. Leu embraced his affianced bride, who swooned in his arms, than, by the orders of the Governor, he was torn from her, and in spite of his struggles, overpowered and cast into the chamber, already known as No. 1 La Bertaudière, being the same as that in which Julie passed the first night of her imprisonment; Sister Bridget followed them, assisted by Corbé, bearing the senseless maiden into the apartment above.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CEMETRY OF THE ST. INNOCENTS: THE MIDNIGHT RENCOUNTER.

THE Baron's astonishment may be conceived on opening the packet which Jacques had forwarded through the medium of St. Marcel, to find it contained the bonds that he imagined Etienne Quinault still held as security for the sums advanced to him by that individual: yet, his surprise was not so great as some folks' might have been under similar circumstances; that is to say, it did not quite, nor even nearly blind him to the evidence of his senses, although he certainly looked at the documents, several times, before he could reconcile himself to the belief of their being really in his possession: but these doubts arose from his inability to conjecture by what means they had been rescued from the custody of the notary, and who was the party through whose interference they were now so opportunely consigned to his own.

A brief letter—a few words in fact—accompanied the packet: they were to this effect: the Baron was not to scruple to retain the bonds, as D'Argenson's claim was liquidated—a fact for the truth of which he held vouchers—but immediately seek that individual, and demand the liberation of Julie: to be on his guard against the Duke of Chartres, was the next injunction: he was not to quit Paris, under any circumstances, nor delay seeking the protection of Louis Quatorze; but not by memorials, as these were all intercepted by the Lieutenant of Police: in conclusion, secresy was enjoined as to the mode whereby the bonds came into his hands, and he was urged to continue his exertions for the discovery of the heir of the late Comte de St. Angin.

Notwithstanding the mysterious character of the epistle, the singular manner in which it had reached him, and his scruples at being made a party to so dark a transaction, the Baron felt it incumbent upon him to follow the advice of his unknown friend. The possession of the bonds, secured him, at least for the present, against further persecution from his cunning adversary, and his joy was unbounded, as he reflected, that by abridging the term at first granted him for the payment of D'Argenson's claim, the Supreme Court had likewise shortened the period of his daughter's imprisonment, whose immediate release he should now be enabled to demand, without constituting himself a prisoner in her place.

Once more happiness reigned in his heart—it beamed in his eyes—it played upon his lips—it betrayed itself in every action, extending its genial influence to all around.

Jeanne observed the change, and was joyful too; and old Prevôt declared herself 'quite another woman, to see Monsieur le Baron look so much like himself again: she never *could* accustom *herself* to be

dull, she said, although she sometimes gave way when she thought of her poor dear Julie; but now the sweet child was coming back to them, there would be an end to this moping all day, which was really quite dreadful, and worse than always having the nightmare.'

The Baron's endeavours to obtain an interview with D'Argenson, proved fruitless; he followed him, without success, from one quarter of Paris to the other, ever in his track, but ever too late to meet him, though never discouraged; finding, however, that he was unlikely to come up with him that day, he determined upon awaiting his arrival on the next, at the *Cabinet Noir*—a spot well known both to the friends and the enemies of the much-dreaded Lieutenant of Police—and accordingly took up his position, very early, at a neighbouring *cabaret*, in the Rue aux Fers, whence he could watch without being seen. But hour after hour passed, and he came not: more than once he strove to obtain admission to the *Cabinet*, but vainly; he had failed in a similar attempt the day before, although this circumstance might be accounted for by his ignorance of the exact time when D'Argenson was to be seen there, as it will be remembered that neither Etienne Quinault, nor the spy, experienced any such difficulty.

On his return to the *cabaret*, after one of his bootless journies in quest of the Lieutenant of Police, he found Jacques seated in a corner, opposite the one he had himself chosen, as offering the best look-out. He started on perceiving the spy, but this mysterious individual did not appear in the smallest degree surprised to see *him*; on the contrary, he seemed to expect him.

"Do not be astonished, Baron," said he, "to find me here. I know your errand, and can assist your search! You know *me!* My name is Jacques."

"And who art thou, mysterious man?" asked the Baron. "Thou didst once render me a service, but thou didst also steal away my daughter."

"It was better thus," resumed Jacques, interrupting the speaker; "had I refused to obey my employers, your daughter might now have been the mistress of a royal duke."

The Baron covered his face with his hands, and remained some time silent: when he again addressed the spy, his eyes were moist and red, his face was flushed, his brows were convulsively knit together, and he grasped his cane more firmly.

"Why," said he, in a husky voice, "didst thou not tell me this before? why didst thou not speak when I had the miscreant face to face? I could then have vented my indignation upon him!"

"Because, Baron, the passion of the Duke of Chartres for your daughter, was her best safeguard; strange as it may appear!"

"How!" exclaimed De St. Auney; "explain!"

"I have little to explain," resumed the spy; "the Duke's passion for your daughter, is not so great as Monseigneur D'Argenson's hatred of you: that is the whole mystery."

"I am yet in the dark," observed the Baron.

"Know then, Monsieur le Baron, that, besides revenging himself

on you, D'Argenson aims at bringing over the Duke to his interests; it is a part of his policy never to assist him, without raising obstacles to enhance the value of the service."

"Service!" ejaculated the Baron: "can such infamous pandering be accounted a service! and my daughter—my innocent, my loving Julie, to be made the price of so vile a bargain! oh! oh!"

"'Tis the truth, notwithstanding, Baron; your daughter or another's; what signifies, so that their end is gained?"

"And thou, too!" exclaimed De St. Auney, bitterly; "thou could'st lend *thyself* to their infamy? shame! shame!"

"Did I not tell you, Baron, that it was better thus?" retorted Jacques; "it was the only way to save the maiden. Is she not safe? do you not possess the means of claiming her liberation?"

"Art thou the friend," asked the Baron, "to whom I owe so much? speak! Is it thou—"

"I know the friend who has served you," answered Jacques, reddening very much, and again interrupting the speaker; "reserve your thanks for him. In the mean while I will assist you to profit by his timely aid. You seek D'Argenson?"

The Baron bowed.

"You will not see him until night; he is gone to Versailles. Perhaps you may not see him at all; but if he comes, he will pass through the Cemetry of the St. Innocents; 'tis his usual route either to his *bureau*, or to his hôtel: you must await him there!"

"Why can I not watch for him from this place?" asked the Baron, somewhat surprised; "dost thou not perceive, that he cannot pass into his *bureau* without my seeing him?"

"He might cross the cemetry, on the opposite side," observed Jacques, "and gain the secret entrance without your knowledge, Baron; but if you take up your position in the western arches, he cannot pass you unnoticed."

"I perceive thou art well acquainted with thy employer's habits," resumed the Baron; "I will take thy advice, friend Jacques, and here is a trifle of money for thy information."

The spy declined the proffered gift, with some show of being offended, saying:

"No, Monsieur le Baron! no gold from you! to serve you is a sufficient recompense."

"But what reason hast thou to serve me, friend?"

"A love of justice, Baron; a desire to protect the innocent and the weak, against the oppression of the strong."

"Thy calling is unworthy of thee, Jacques!"

"I am not linked to infamy because my calling is infamous," retorted the spy; "did it not exist, you would perhaps be in the Bastile, and your daughters in the power of your enemy! Good day, Monsieur le Baron. Ten o'clock is D'Argenson's usual hour. Be punctual."

The Baron watched Jacques depart with regret—he ought to have questioned him—he felt that he should like to know more of him—

who he was—whence he came—why he followed an avocation so generally desecrated—*he*, possessed of such sentiments, and who was evidently fitted to better things—he reproached himself for not detaining him; he was the very man, who, by his position, was most likely to assist his efforts to discover the heir of his late friend: he had allowed a good opportunity to escape, but determined to take advantage of the next that offered. After some time, passed in ruminations such as these, the Baron slowly returned home, where he remained until within an hour of the time appointed by Jacques for him to repair to the Cemetry of the St. Innocents.

It was not without hesitation that he prepared to set forth upon his nocturnal mission—he lingered on the threshhold of his dwelling, and his heart misgave him as he embraced Jeanne. Would not to-morrow do as well? To-morrow! and Julie to be left another night in the Bastile! No! to-morrow would not do! she could be liberated that very night, late as it was; he would not leave her there one moment longer. Jeanne too was so anxious to embrace her sister. Her father had communicated to her the contents of the mysterious packet, and she, in her singleness of heart, secretly thanked Madame de Maintenon for her promptitude; no one but *she* could have accomplished so much in so short a time; to-morrow, she would go to Versailles with her sister, and both could then express their gratitude to their mother's generous friend. As soon as they returned from the Bastile, she had made up her mind to tell Julie and her father the great secret which she had so long—for a whole week—treasured up all to herself, in her own little heart: even now it fluttered, and trembled, and throbbed, as if that same secret knew it ought not to be kept a prisoner, and was determined upon forcing itself out somehow, from its confinement: with what difficulty did her lips press down upon each other, when, after escaping from her heart, that secret was nigh slipping out so slily between them: but the beautiful jailers remained true to their trust, although they had a hard struggle for it, especially when the Baron kissed her so affectionately, and said he would give the world to know their benefactor. Never eyes beamed so brightly as her's, when she heard her father say that—never smile was half so sweet, nor joy so pure—but no! the lips were inexorable—and the secret, in spite of its desperate struggles to break away, was again compelled to sink back into the little fluttering heart whence it had come.

At length, the Baron departed, and slowly bent his steps in the direction of the cemetry.*

* This cemetry adjoined the church of the same name, situated at the angle formed by the Rue aux Fers with the Rue St. Denis, and which were both destroyed in 1786, to make way for a new market, that received the name of "*Marché des Innocens*:" the history of both church and cemetry is as curious as interesting.

Geffroi, Prior of Vigeois, says that the church was founded to commemorate the martyrdom of a young Jew named Richard, who, having embraced Christianity, was slain on its site by his exasperated brethren. After his death, miraculous manifestations of divinity were observed there, and the spot was consecrated. According to the Chronicle of Lambert de Waterlos, this event occurred in 1163, who

He reached it some time before the appointed hour, but hurried backwards and forwards through the galleries, notwithstanding, as though fearful that the object of his search had got there before him, and he was desirous of overtaking him. There were a great many

further affirms that the young proselyte was crucified by the Rabbis. The Abbé Lebeuf places its foundation in the reign of Philip-Augustus, as does Henri Sauval, the latter adding, that the expenses of its erection were defrayed from the deniers proceeding from the confiscated property of the Jews when they were expelled from France. Other historians assert that the celebrated Nicholas Flamel built it at his own expense, in order to propitiate Heaven in his behalf, for practising astrology alchymy, and witchcraft. But Dulaure thinks its origin is due to an oratory that stood there, such as it was usual to erect in cemetries. It is very certain, that the church, by whomsoever founded, was repaired, in fact rebuilt, in 1445, and dedicated to the St. Innocents Martyrs, on the 22nd of January, St. Peter's day, in that year, the event being commemorated by an inscription on the wall, by "*Monseigneur Denys Dumoulin, Patriarch of Antioch, and Bishop of Paris, who, to all its benefactors who should on that day, or within the octave, visit it, granted one hundred days indulgence.*" The following year however, the bishop offended his flock, and effectually closed the cemetry, in consequence of his exorbitant charges for allowing people to be buried there.

The Cure of the St. Innocents was united to the chapter of St. Opportune, by Pope Clement the Eighth, in 1380, with a privilege to the latter, to appoint a perpetual vicar; but in consequence of the frequent disputes that arose on the nomination of the vicars, Calixtus the Third revoked Clement's Bull, on the 1st of September, 1457.

In 1474, Louis Onze granted that portion of the *Voirie de la Charronnerie*—at present the site of the Rue de la Ferronnerie and the Rue St. Honoré—comprised within the two gates at each extremity thereof, to build houses upon, the revenues arising from which were to go to the foundation of a choir of six children for the church. His grant was ratified by his successors, when the revenues became sufficiently great to augment the choir and to add music.

Adjoining the church was a small house in which women used to seclude themselves; the door was then walled up, and the *recluses* received food through a very small window. The names of two of the most celebrated of these enthusiasts have been preserved. The oldest known, was one Jeanne La Vodrière, who entered on the 11th of October, 1442. The other was Alix La Burgotte, who died there, on the 29th of June, 1466. Louis Onze caused a bronze statue of the first-named to be erected in the church, against one of the pillars of the chapel of the Virgin; over the grand altar of the former, was a painting by Pierre Corneille, of the Massacre of the Innocents. But although the house in question was a place of voluntary exile, female criminals were sometimes imprisoned there for life, a few of whose names have likewise been preserved, notwithstanding that their memory, like their crimes, ought to be execrated.

The cemetry was originally established—though the precise date is dubious—in consequence of the malaria arising from the custom then prevalent of burying persons in their cellars, gardens, court-yards, and under their habitations. Between the years 1180 or 1186, Philip-Augustus enclosed it, together with a part of an open space called the *Champeaux* where cattle were sold, and a vaulted gallery was at a later period, constructed all round, having four issues, the whole forming a public thoroughfare. This gallery consisted of eighty-four arches, and was called the *Charniers*. Beneath it were interred such as could afford to pay for the privilege—the open ground of the cemetry being allotted to the poorer classes. It appears that there were several contributors to this Charnier, *(carnarium.)* Le Maréchal de Boucicaut is mentioned as having constructed one portion of it, at the commencement of the fifteenth century, whilst the whole of that side, near the Rue de la Lingerie, was built by Nicholas Flamel, who, with his wife, Pernelle, was buried beneath it; *her* tomb stood here, and on it her epitaph, in French and Latin verse, composed by her husband.

On the wall under that side of the gallery, running parallel with the Rue de la

persons going to and fro when he first went in—for ten was not a late hour—who, on seeing him peer so anxiously into every face that passed, looked back at him, wondering whom he could want; but every minute their numbers diminished; now two or three dropping in

Ferronnerie, was painted the celebrated *danse macabre*, or dance of death; the spot was precised, as recently as 1702 by the "Journal de Paris," which mentions that on a certain day a priest preached on a scaffold, erected in this street, standing with his back to the *Charniers* of the St. Innocents, on the side where "*est peinte la danse macabre.*" It is proper to state, that the said Charniers were let out to hosiers, glovers, stationers, letter-writers, &c., who here erected stalls for the sale of their wares.

In the middle of the cemetry stood a single lantern, elevated about eighteen feet from the ground, upon an obelisk-shaped pillar, surmounted by a cross, and ornamented with basso relievos, representing the triumph of the Holy Sacrament, sculptured by Jean Gougon.

Henri Sauval, speaking of the vaulted gallery around the cemetry, mentions an inscription which he saw, (1720) against a house in the Rue de la Ferronnerie, and which ran thus:—"This *Charnier* was built and given to the church, for the love of God, in the year one thousand three hundred and ninety-nine. Pray to God for the defunct." It is, however, more than probable, that the inscription alluded only to a certain portion thereof.

Several curious epitaphs adorned the cemetry, two of which are worth mentioning. The first was to this effect. "Here lieth Yoland Bailly, who died, the year 1574; the one hundred and twenty-eighth year of her age, the forty-second of her widow-hood; who saw, or was able to count before her decease, two hundred and ninety-five children, her issue." This epitaph was inscribed on a silver plate. The second is still more eccentric. "Here lieth Nothing now! but he here placed this cross."

Amongst other celebrated personages whose remains were interred here, may be mentioned François Eudes de Mézeray, so well-known by his History of France.

When the authorities of Paris, in 1786, determined to demolish the church and the cemetry, and construct the market that now stands upon its site, the bones and human remains were carried away by night to the Catacombs and the Tombe-Isoire, but even then the stench was so great, that many of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood fell victims to the fevers it engendered.

The beautiful fountain that stands in the centre of the market, is not the original *Fontaine des Innocens*, which was triangular, and abutted against the church at the corner of the Rue St. Denis and the Rue aux Fers. This fountain existed in the thirteenth century, having been erected previously to the year 1280, although many years elapsed before water could be conveyed to it. This, however, was at last effected by a junction-pipe carried from the Fountain St. Lazare, alimented by the aqueduct of St. Gervais from the waters which flow from the heights of Menil-montant and Romainville, the reservoir being situated in the Près St. Gervais.

The three sides of the original fountain, the most ancient in the interior of Paris, consisted of three arcades supported by Corinthian pilasters surmounted by an *attique* and fronton. Three Naides, sculptured by Jean Gougon, were added to it by Pierre Lescot, Abbé of Clagni, in 1551; these were its only ornaments.

When the church was demolished in 1786, an engineer named Six, proposed to erect a fountain in the middle of the projected market, and to embellish it with the relievos &c. belonging to the original fountain. This project met with approbation: the old fountain was carefully taken to pieces and the model of the new one prepared. As another side was to be added, an artist named Pajou was employed to sculpture three more Naides, from the models of Jean Gougon; a task he executed with so much skill, that the copies are scarcely distinguishable from the originals. The lions at the base, are of lead, and modelled after those of the fountain of Termini at Rome.

In the cemetry of the St. Innocents, or rather the market of that name, were buried some of the victims of July 1830, whose remains were, in 1840, transferred to the vaults beneath the column of July, elevated on the Place de la Bastille.

The Tragical Death of the Cemetery of the Saint Innocents.

together—then one—then a long interval, when a third would hurry by, crossing himself as he went, without looking behind him; at last, eleven o'clock struck, bringing the patrol, who wished him good night and continued his rounds. Where could D'Argenson be? a quarter-past eleven; half-past: not a soul; all silent—with the grey moon-light shining amongst the white tombs, making them look, in the distance, like so many corpses completely concealed in their shrouds—some sitting up with arms extended—some lying down at full length upon the grass—some seated in clusters—but all immoveable. Was that a step? Hark! it clatters through the opposite gallery! he hastens towards the spot—the step leaps over to the side he has just quitted!—'tis the echo of his own: he hurries back and again listens, long and anxiously: nothing: all still silent.

Now, there *is* a footstep! it comes towards him! 'tis a heavy, but firm tread! how it echoes through the vaulted gallery—and amongst the tomb-stones! tramp! tramp! tramp! nearer and nearer! from pillar to pillar it flies, multiplied by its own quickness! leaps over the graves—is beaten back, and forwards, and sideways, and bounds over to the opposite arches, where 'tis heard again: tramp! tramp! tramp! tramp! one would think that that one footstep had suddenly raised a legion of ghosts, booted and spurred, from their silent tenement, all emulous to join in the *danse macabre*, to greet the evil spirit of Paris on his passage through these regions of the dead.

As the Baron withdrew behind a pillar, the better to await, unobserved, the arrival of his enemy, he fancied that the moon-beams played a moment upon a second figure, now concealed in the dark side of one of the arches: it might be fancy, for a glimpse was all he obtained of the man—if man it was; he looked again, but all was dark and deathlike; pillars and monuments, graves and tombstones, and in the middle of the grave-yard, the solitary lamp, raised upon its obelisk-shaped column, glimmering red and fitfully, like an evil meteor, in the midst of the thick atmosphere: nothing else.

Had D'Argenson also beheld that same shadow? His footsteps no longer resounded beneath the vaults! But hark! they come—stealthily and slowly—he must have seen something—for he turns his head quickly from left to right, from right to left—now stops, now again resumes his hurried pace—occasionally darting through one of the arches into the cemetry, as if in pursuit or in search of some object, then regains the sombre gallery! He has passed the pillar behind which the Baron stands concealed; the latter steps cautiously out from his hiding-place; the next moment he is at the side of the Lieutenant of Police, and stops him by laying a hand upon his arm.

"Stay, Monseigneur D'Argenson. I have a word to say! 'Tis I; the Baron de St. Auney."

"Thou, Sieur Baron! *ventre bleu!* here! and at this hour."

"I sought thee yesterday," resumed the former speaker, "but unavailingly; to-day also I have watched for thee, and up to this moment, with little better success: the object I seek, thou canst doubtless conjecture! Where is my daughter?"

"Where thou didst leave her, Sieur Baron," retorted D'Argenson; continuing in an under-tone, "and where thou shouldst be if I could now have my will."

"I have sought thee to demand her liberation, Sieur Lieutenant; I have obeyed the mandate of the Supreme Court!"

"Yes! I know it! *tonnerre dieu!* Meet me to-morrow, at moon, at the Bastile, I will—"

"To-morrow will not do," exclaimed the Baron; "my child must be restored to me this night! this very hour! she has already inhabited that infamous retreat too long."

They had stopped in the broad shadow of one of the pillars; the moon cast its grey light through the arches before and behind them, upon the white tombs to their right, and upon the urns and graven tablets that stood fixed in the walls to their left—it shone too upon the marble slabs beneath their feet, shewing the name of the occupants of the vaults under them, and resting upon the inscriptions that the hand of affection had traced, and the hand of time respected: one stone in particular appeared more conspicuous than the rest: it lay immediately before them—right in their path—they must pass over it: upon it were traced these words:

"*Cy gysent les ossemens du Sieur Ignace Noël, prestre de l'esglise des Sts. Innocens, lesquel fust ycel assassinné dans ce lieu sacrè, le treize febvrier, l'an de grâce mil cinq cents soixante-quinze, par un monstre sacrilesge, dont le nom sera à jamais execré, savoir, Pierre Thomas Jardine, et lesquel fust pendu à la Gresve, le douze du mois de mai suivant, et son cadasvre jesté parmi les ordures au Mont-faucon! Passant! Priez Dieu pour le repos de leur asme.*"*

D'Argenson returned no answer to the Baron's demand, for his eyes had become suddenly riveted upon that tablet, his whole frame shaking violently as they wandered restlessly over it. He knew the spot well; often, by day and by night, early and late, at all hours, had he passed it; yet it seemed as though that tomb had all at once started up in his path. Why should it, now, for the first time, so forcibly arrest his attention? Why did he tremble so, as he read that word, "assassinated?" Why should not the moon hide her light behind a cloud to prevent his reading that word? What dark thoughts did it conjure up! How his mind dwelt upon the dead! How suddenly he became sensible, that nothing but death reigned around—with shroudless skeletons gibbering at him from behind the tombs! How every thing spoke, and smacked, and smelt of death: it breathed in the thick dank air; it clung to every object, turning the white tombstones to a livid green, the palour of which, in the moonlight, was

* Here lie the bones of the Sieur Ignatius Noel, priest of the church of the Holy Innocents, who was here assassinated, in this sacred spot, on the thirteenth of February, in the year of grace one thousand five hundred and seventy-five, by a sacrilegious monster, whose name shall be for ever execrated, namely, Peter Thomas Jardine, who was hanged at the Grève on the twelfth of the month of May following, and his carcase thrown amongst the ordure at Mont-faucon. Passer-by! Pray to God for the repose of their souls.

perfectly horrifying—frightful. The grass, though it had shot up, luxuriantly high, looked pale and unhealthy, growing only here and there in patches; the few late autumn-flowers that remained, drooped, half-withered, in the last stage of a diseased existence, and there was a faintness in the atmosphere, a rank odour, exhaled from the humid earth, that was insupportable! No! nothing but death around! tombs before him—behind him—to his right—to his left—and escutcheons over his head; whilst between two of the nearest sepulchres, gasped an unfinished grave—the mattock and shovel thrown carelessly down upon the earth that lay there, piled up, in two heaps, bestrewn with remnants of human bones and coffins—with here and there large worms, gorged with their last repast, shining in the moon-beams, and stretched lazily at full length upon the surface of the yellow soil! The spot was dark—very dark; and silent—very silent; and there was no human being nigh: not even the echo of a human footstep: D'Argenson nervously clutched his sword—he half drew it from its sheath, looking at the Baron with hollow eyes, and blanched cheek, and quivering lips, whilst a deadly, clammy moisture stood out, in large drops, from every pore of his agitated frame: the Baron drew nearer to him, but he shrunk from his approach. Oh! how he hated that man! never had he hated him with so deadly a hate as at this moment; with that word "assassinated," staring him in the face, and that unfinished grave gaping at his side!

As the Baron advanced nearer still towards D'Argenson, for the purpose of again addressing him, the last sentence inscribed on the tablet, caught his eye; he stepped round, to avoid trampling over the remains of the murdered priest, and raising his hat, as a tribute of respect to the dead, exclaimed:

"Sleep in peace! and may thy murderer find grace in the sight of Heaven!" the sign of the cross accompanying the latter words.

D'Argenson heard the prayer, and saw the sign: he shuddered; his sword glided noiselessly back into its scabbard; he made up to the Baron, and said to him in a husky, half-choked, guttural voice that the prevailing silence rendered awfully distinct:

"Follow me!"

And now again those heavy footsteps reverberated through the charnel gallery! tramp! tramp! tramp! more distant each time! tramp! tramp! tramp! tramp! from pillar to pillar! from tomb to tomb! further and further still! hush! they are gone! the regions of the dead are again silent! the evil spirit of Paris has passed away from amidst their murky solitudes.

CHAPTER XXIV.

D'ARGENSON AND HIS VICTIMS: THE LISTENER.

As the figures of the Baron and the Lieutenant of Police retreated, a third stole from behind a pillar, near the monument erected to the memory of Ignatius Noel; it was that of a man, closely enfolded in a cloak, who had been an attentive, though unseen, witness of the late scene.

That man was Jacques: he followed the Baron and his guide, from the cemetry into the Rue St. Denis; from the Rue St. Denis to the Rue de la Verrerie; and thence, through the Place St. Jean, into the Rue St. Antoine, to the great outer gate of the Bastile, keeping always at such a distance in their rear, as to prevent either from observing him.

Midnight struck some time before they reached the sombre dwelling, which could be seen from afar, casting its broad shadow and dismal gloom over every object, darkening the houses, and frowning upon the two or three citizens whose way homewards lay within its circle. The sentry on duty outside, lowered his musket as soon as he saw strangers approaching, and challenged them, but immediately upon recognizing D'Argenson, presented arms, summoning the sentinel within, to open the gate, which he did, forthwith, the Lieutenant of Police passing in first, closely followed by the Baron: as they disappeared, the gate closed upon them, leaving the spy crouched in the angle of a door-way near.

A few minutes elapsed, when the dull, heavy sound of the first draw-bridge being lowered, broke upon the dead silence of the night: another pause; the great draw-bridge was let down, and all again became quiet, save the dull chimes of the bell on the roundaway, ringing the half hour, immediately followed by the click of the sentinels' metal checks, as they dropped them into the box appointed to receive them.*

Jacques remained in his hiding-place, until a suitable time had

* The night-watch on the roundaway, which was relieved every two hours, consisted of four sentinels, who, each in turn, struck the hour at every quarter, upon a bell fixed expressly. As a means of ensuring their vigilance, each sentinel was furnished with eight round pieces of metal, perforated in the centre, and numbered, which were ordered to be dropped, one at every quarter of an hour, into a box constructed to receive them; as the latter contained a tell-tale index, it rendered impossible for the sentinels either to miss their turn, or to deposit two or more checks instead of one, without a certainty of detection; at the expiration of the watch, the officer on duty inspected the box, and reported accordingly. This curious piece of mechanism was destroyed by the mob, at the taking of the fortress.

passed, when he emerged therefrom, and boldly advanced towards the sentry at the outer gate, facing him as he turned round to resume his walk.

"Thou knowest me," he said, disclosing his features; "Jacques."

The man inclined his head, and, as before, summoned his comrade within the gate.

"Who goes there?" cried the latter.

"A friend," responded Jacques.

"Thy name."

"Jacques! In the name of the King, and of Monseigneur D'Argenson, open! I command thee."

Once more the door revolved upon its heavy hinges to admit the new comer, who, being recognized by the second sentry, was allowed to pass into the first outer court.

Crossing the draw-bridge, which, as he expected had not been raised after the passage of the Lieutenant of Police, he experienced no difficulty in cheating the vigilance of the sub-officer on duty at the corps-de-garde, to whom he was personally known as D'Argenson's agent; this functionary saluted him familiarly as he went by, without thinking of stopping him, supposing he came to the Bastile upon urgent business, which the Lieutenant's visit at that late hour, rendered the more likely.*

The spy boldly continued his march through the second inner court, and thence over the standing-bridge built across the great ditch, and over the principal draw-bridge that fell upon it, and which, like the first, thrown across the smaller ditch, remained lowered, in readiness for the departure of the Lieutenant of Police. As before, the sentinel on duty challenged him, but on his making himself known, permitted him to pass through the first corps-de-garde, where, at the second entrance, he met Monsieur de Joncas who was going his rounds, with a picket of soldiers.

"What is the meaning of all this?" said the latter to him in a half whisper, at the same time motioning to the guard to advance, in order to place it out of ear-shot.

Jacques assumed a look of unmistakeable profundity, which was intended to intimate his being laden with a valuable cargo of information, bearing immediately upon the object of the visit alluded to, but which he could not conveniently discharge, at that precise moment. De Joncas appeared to understand that the knowledge in question would be reserved for his future enlightenment, and nodding, as much as to say, "Oh! very well!" was about to follow the picket, now waiting for him within the door-way of the corps-de-garde, when the spy beckoning him closer, put the following questions to him, in a whisper:

"Where's St. Marc?"

* It formed one point of the duty of "*The sub-officers of the garrison, to learn to know by sight, every person whomsoever, who might be in any manner connected with the Bastile;*" a point strenuously insisted upon and enforced by the second law of the "*consigne du château.*"

De Joncas pointed in the direction of the Council-chamber.

The spy seemed pleased, and continued:

"And Corbé?"

He received the same silent, expressive intimation as before, and appeared still better pleased.

"Is the Baron with them?" he continued.

De Joncas nodded.

"How long have they been there?" asked Jacques.

"St. Marc and Corbé have but now passed through," answered De Joncas.

"I am in time," observed the spy with still greater satisfaction, and without further remark, abruptly quitted the side of the King's Lieutenant, and made direct for the Council-chamber, leaving the latter personage somewhat mystified by his abrupt departure, although far from suspecting the motives which had urged his interrogator to question him so closely respecting the whereabout of the individuals mentioned.

And here it will become necessary to retrograde a little, in order to obtain a clue to the movements of the spy.

When Jacques left the *étude* of Maitre Etienne Quinault, on the morning that he obtained from him the thirty-five thousand crowns, together with the Baron's bonds and the forged document, he entertained a suspicion, amounting almost to certainty, that the notary would not fail to communicate the transaction to the Lieutenant of Police, notwithstanding the threat impending over him; he therefore remained in the neighbourhood, to note his movements, following him to D'Argenson's bureau, in the evening, unobserved, and watching him out again, when, as will be remembered, he waited upon the latter functionary, according to appointment.

Now, although the Lieutenant of Police did not even hint at Maitre Etienne Quinault's visit, nor at the possibility of Jacques having stumbled, as he entered, against that individual, nor at his knowledge of the circumstances under which they had met and separated that morning, the spy was too well acquainted with his employer not to be perfectly aware of the nature of his recent conference with his friend of the Marais, and was therefore neither astonished at his silence, nor deceived by it, although he perceived that D'Argenson imagined *him* to be ignorant of Quinault's visit, and likewise of its object. This very unwillingness on the part of the Lieutenant of Police, to betray his acquaintance with the transaction, satisfied Jacques that he contemplated some plan of mischief, whose accomplishment he intended to carry out without assistance, and to which the Baron de St. Auney and his daughters would probably fall the first victims, Etienne Quinault the second, and perhaps himself, (Jacques) the last, as soon as D'Argenson could dispense with his services.

However, for his superior's enmity, Jacques cared little, as far as he himself was concerned, relying upon his many secret resources to enable him to counteract his machinations; but if he cared little for himself, he cared still less for Etienne Quinault, and absolutely nothing at all for any consequences that D'Argenson's malice might

entail upon that worthy; as regarded the Baron and his daughters, the case wore a different aspect; upon these indeed, he dreaded the issue of the plot which he doubted not the Lieutenant of Police was concocting against them, and therefore determined upon closely observing his movements, firmly resolved—on account of the friendship he had conceived for that unfortunate family—to thwart his projects against its peace—or, at any rate attempt it.

This was a task by no means easy, since, being suspected by D'Argenson, he could not hope to obtain from him, any clue to his intentions. To warn the Baron of an impending evil was his next thought; but how set him on his guard against an evil that he could not himself define; of which in fact, he knew nothing; and which might, after all, be imaginary—although of its positive character he entertained no doubt. The idea was in turn abandoned for another, upon which he forthwith commenced acting: it was to subject the Lieutenant of Police to surveillance, as likewise the Baron, and if possible, bring them together in some locality where he might become an unobserved witness of their interview. In this plan, chance marvellously assisted him, for D'Argenson receiving an unexpected command to wait upon the Duke of Chartres, at Versailles—whither the latter was gone for a few days—left him more at liberty to watch the Baron, whom he knew to be on the look out for the Lieutenant of Police: how and where he met with the former, and the result of their colloquy, has been shewn.

His next step was to choose a place where the Baron could meet D'Argenson, and he, Jacques, conveniently overhear their conversation unobserved. For this double purpose the *Cabinet Noir* was ineligible, inasmuch as a thick door would divide him from the parties, obstructing not only his vision, but his hearing also. In this dilemma, he fixed upon the western gallery, or *charniers* of the Cemetry of the St. Innocents, through which he knew D'Argenson must pass, either on his way home, or to his *bureau*, in the event of his returning from Versailles that night—an event in nowise unlikely—his important duties rendering his daily presence in Paris indispensable.

The spot he selected, was every way suitable to his purpose, being not only mostly unfrequented after the last vesper-bell, but quiet, and secluded, and offering every facility for concealment: he as little thought how nearly fatal that spot would become to the Baron, as D'Argenson suspected that there would have been a human witness to the crime he at one moment contemplated committing.

Before the appointed hour, Jacques arrived at his post: he saw the Baron approach, and watched him pace the gallery, every moment shifting his position for fear of being observed: as the hours advanced, without bringing D'Argenson, he almost suspected that he would not return to Paris that night, and twice or thrice, was on the point of disclosing himself to the Baron, for the purpose of appointing another rendezvous for the morrow: this resolve, however, he as often checked, in the hope that D'Argenson would arrive yet, notwithstanding he had overstepped his usual hour: his previsions proved correct.

The Lieutenant of Police had started in the morning for Versailles on foot, according to his usual custom—one well known to Jacques—intending to return thence in the same manner—this being a mode of travelling which he affected for one important reason, namely: because it afforded him ample opportunities of prying into the affairs of any one whom he might chance to meet, and of inspecting the posts of the day and the night patrol which he had established across the country, at that period much infested by foot-pads and high-way robbers: indeed, he had been summoned to Versailles, by his friend the Duke, to receive information concerning, and to concert immediate measures for, the detection of a daring robbery committed on some of his retinue, only a few days before, under circumstances that rendered secrecy and dispatch more than usually necessary to forward the ends of justice, and his return to Paris had been retarded, in consequence of his remaining longer than customary with the authorities of the town and of its vicinage.*

At length Jacques heard his well-known footstep echo through the hollow gallery of the cemetry: he witnessed the trepidation of the Baron as he met his enemy, and heard the short colloquy that ensued between them; the issue is known.

Having then watched them to the Bastile, and heard the falling of the draw-bridges, he knew he could venture in after them, without risk of being seen by D'Argenson, whom he desired to avoid; the boldness of his plan, not less than that of its execution ensured him the success he anticipated.

Upon reaching the door of the Council-chamber, he listened at it very attentively, but heard nothing save a great shuffling of feet, the unlocking and opening of a door—which he knew could be only that of the iron receptacle for the Record-book—and a noise as of some one striking a cane very rapidly upon the stones; this he regarded as a symptom that the Lieutenant of Police was growing impatient, and that, as yet, no business had been transacted: he therefore, forthwith ensconced himself within the secret closet in the wall which has already been mentioned, and there impatiently awaited the result of his undertaking.

"So! Sieur Baron," said a harsh voice that Jacques instantly recognized, "thou hast found means to pay my claim!"

"I have already told thee so," was the answer.

"Hast thou the papers about thee, to prove all is correct, Sieur Baron?"

"I have, Monseigneur."

"Good! good!"

* In the "*Memoirs Secrets du regne de Louis Quatorze et de sa Cour,*" will be found a detailed account of the condition of the public roads at the period of D'Argenson's appointment to the post of Lieutenant of Police. In one place it is stated, "that so numerous and bold were the marauders that infested the King's high-way between Paris and Versailles, that one day, at noon, the carriage of Monsieur le Duc de Chartres was stopped, and the illustrious travellers it contained, were robbed of their jewels and money to a large amount, the postillions having been first attacked, and knocked off their horses."

There followed a long, low chuckle, and a short pause, after which the door was opened, and the footsteps of Corbé resounded along the passage in the direction of the corps-de-garde.

During his absence, the silence was broken only by a crackling noise, as though the leaves of the large folio were being rapidly turned over; the pause was brief, for Corbé very shortly returned.

He was evidently not alone, as other footsteps than his became audible, although the strangers stopped short outside the door, the Lieutenant Governor observing in a whisper, ere he again entered the apartment:

"You will know when."

"Well, nephew," growled St. Marc, as the latter made his appearance.

"Thy orders, uncle, are obeyed. We are ready!"

Here D'Argenson burst into a vociferous laugh, and addressing the Baron, said, in a tone where malice and exultation appeared struggling for the mastery:

"Now, Sieur Baron, we are again equal! Ah! ah! ah! Thou would'st have overreached *me*—but—thou shalt find that I am not so easily deceived."

Here the laugh was renewed more vociferously than before.

"What is the meaning of this, Monseigneur?" asked the Baron, as soon as he could make his voice heard; "I have not attempted to deceive thee! I hold my bonds and Maitre Etienne Quinault's receipt! what more dost thou require?"

"How didst thou obtain them? *tonnerre dieu!*" shouted D'Argenson; "tell me that! Was it through thy friend Jacques? ah! ah! ah! a worthy friend truly! ah! ah! ah! But he shall feel my vengeance too ere long!"

Shall he though, thought Jacques, flattening himself against the wall of his narrow cell.

The Baron was evidently taken by surprise, for his voice appeared to falter as he answered:

"Thou knowest well the money has been paid, for Quinault would never have delivered up these bonds without it! As far as I know, Sieur D'Argenson, Jacques was only an agent for some other friend who is as yet a stranger to me!"

"Thou liest, Baron," retorted the Lieutenant of Police; "here I can tell thee so to thy face; thou liest, I say!"

"Villain!" replied the Baron; "villain! to insult me when I am in thy power! But what could I expect from thee! I sully my tongue in answering thee! Restore my daughter, and let me go!"

"Go?" exclaimed D'Argenson; "go? ah! ah! ah! trapped, Baron! trapped, I say! trapped! ah! ah! ah! Without there!"

The door flew open, the heavy tread of soldiers resounded through the apartment, together with the clank of muskets being grounded.

"Seize your prisoner," again shouted D'Argenson; "secure him; hold him fast! ah! ah! ah! trapped like a rat! ah! ah! ah!"

The groans of the Baron cut Jacques to the heart, who had not

dreamt of such a result; to attempt a rescue would be madness; he could only devour his remorse, and swear vengeance against D'Argenson.

"Search him, Corbé," exclaimed St. Marc.

"Oh! monsters!" ejaculated the unhappy Baron, struggling in vain to liberate himself from the firm grasp of the soldiers; "will the day never come when wickedness, such as this shall meet its punishment!"

"It will! it shall!" said Jacques, mentally, clenching his hand in an agony of excitement.

"Oh! my children!" sobbed de St. Auney, unable to restrain his grief, "my sweet Julie! my beloved Jeanne! unfortunate children! what will become of you! Accursed, thrice accursed destroyer of my peace, where is my beautiful child? Let me behold her for a moment—for one moment only—let her know her father is here? one kiss—"

"Shall I gag him, uncle?"

There was no answer returned, but the Baron's voice was not again heard, whilst D'Argenson's hideous chuckle rose high and loud above the struggles of his victim.

The spy's anguish at this crisis, became perfectly horrifying, and would have appalled a Stoic, could he have seen him crouched in the furthermost angle of that dark cell, resting his head against its cold walls, down which, as it oozed from his throbbing temples, the cold sweat ran in streamlets: his hands were clenched so hard and close, that the finger-nails imbedded themselves into the flesh—had he then grasped D'Argenson by the throat, he could not have clutched them closer—whilst his teeth grated so against one another, that he took up the corner of his cloak between them, lest the noise should betray his presence to the quick ears of St. Marc or Corbé: when he withdrew it, the cloth was bitten into shreds.

"What cells are empty, Sieur St. Marc?" asked the Lieutenant of Police, as soon as his diabolical mirth had subsided.

"Number one, in the Bertaudière is unoccupied now, Monseigneur; the new prisoner was, this evening, removed into the *calotte!*"

"Away with him," shouted the former speaker; "we are quits, Sieur Baron; ah! ah! ah! trapped! trapped!"

As the soldiers were about to remove the prisoner, St. Marc once more addressed his nephew:

"Go, Corbé! go with them; see him safe, and look in upon the others on thy way back."

Another minute, and they were gone.

"'T is a good night's work, Sieur St. Marc," observed D'Argenson; "a good night's work, and I have *not* killed him! no! I have *not* killed him! ah! ah! ah! trapped! trapped! a good, a very good night's work; *sang dieu!*"

"I have news for Monseigneur," said St. Marc.

"Out with them, then! I am in haste!"

"The Iron-Mask—"

"Ah! what?"

"Struck me to day."

"Thee! Sieur St. Marc?"

"Yes! he attempted to establish a communication with the exterior."

"*Tonnerre dieu!* How, Sieur Governor?" hurriedly demanded the Lieutenant of Police.

"By means of notes fastened to arrows, which he discharged from a bow manufactured from one of the strings of his guitar, and a piece of yew that was sent up amongst his fire-wood!"

"Well?"

"I remonstrated with him, Monseigneur, when he struck my hat from off my head."

"Served thee right, insolent! *sang dieu!* dost thou not, by this time, know the respect due to that man?"

"Pardon me, Monseigneur; the omission was involuntary."

"Look to him, St. Marc, or thy life shall answer for his indiscretion! But of the notes! have any been found?"

"Here are two which were picked up within the walls, and brought to me by the sentinel on duty."

"Good! keep the circumstance secret, and to-morrow, nail planks against his window! Any thing else, Sieur St. Marc?"

"Yes! Monseigneur! the prisoner of the ditch of the Bertaudière has found his tongue again?"

"Ah! after so long?"

"And he is not mad, Monseigneur!"

"Indeed! I wonder at that; *ventre bleu!* I'll hear thy tale about him another time! Where hast thou put Jean Baptiste Poisson! thy friend, St. Marc! ah! ah! ah!"

"In the cage, Monseigneur!" responded the latter, with a shout of savage joy.

"Good! do what thou wilt with him! Every thing, any thing but kill him; eh? friend St. Marc."

There was a joint chuckle here: the worthy pair were evidently on the best of terms, and facetiously inclined. Their mirthful moments, however, were abridged by D'Argenson, who abruptly bidding the governor "a good night," made for the door, when perceiving that this functionary had arisen to accompany him out, he exclaimed:

"No! remain where thou art, Sieur Governor; I have left thee thy work, *ventre bleu!* besides I know my road, I think; ah! ah! good night! good night!"

So saying he departed, leaving, as Jacques found when he emerged from the closet, the door of the Council-chamber, half-way open.

The spy watched his opportunity to steal out, noiselessly, after the Lieutenant of Police, whom he could hear, only a little in advance of him, speaking to the officers on duty in the outer court. On reaching the corps-de-garde he was surprised to see Ru, who however, did not appear so, to see him. On the part of the latter, the emotion seemed pleasurable, for with a grin that would have put a laughing hyena completely out of countenance, he showed the spy a piece of gold and a letter, the former of which he had no sooner exhibited, than he

again pocketed it, thrusting the epistle into Jacques' hand, with numerous telegraphic hints to keep the affair a profound secret. The spy had no time to spare, for D'Argenson was now crossing the second draw-bridge; quitting Ru, in the door-way, he walked leisurely past the sentry, bowing to the officers, and making the best of his way over the great bridge, gained the outer gate just as the sentry was about to close it: immediately after, the voice of Corbé was heard, giving directions to the soldiers to raise the draw-bridges to their usual position at night.

CHAPTER XXV.

BRINGS TO LIGHT A FEW OF THE SECRETS OF LUTETIA. THE EMPEROR JULIAN DEPARTS UPON A MYSTERIOUS ENTERPRIZE.

As the spy directed his steps towards the palace of the Roman Emperors, he had ample leisure to reflect upon the events which he had so recently witnessed, and congratulated himself upon his discovery of D'Argenson's treacherous intentions, as the knowledge thus acquired, promised to prove the means of assisting him to baffle them; shewing him, moreover, the necessity of being more than ever upon his guard against his astute superior, and of keeping the strictest watch over his proceedings.

The unfortunate Baron's fate, he sincerely lamented, not only because of the great friendship he entertained for him, but because he had, unwittingly, become the instrument of his incarceration, by bringing him into collision with D'Argenson. Yet, he argued, no blame attached to him—he had acted for the best—at least he thought so at the time—nor could foresee the deep snare into which the Baron had fallen, to rescue whom and Julia, if possible—for success was more than doubtful—he determined forthwith to employ every stratagem, every resource at his command, reckless of the consequences such a course might entail upon himself.

Fear the Lieutenant of Police he did not: so little indeed, that he debated with himself whether he should not openly, and at once, set his power at defiance; but the great impolicy of this step deterred him from adopting it, as some few advantages might thereby be lost, whilst none whatever could possibly be gained. That he had now become more than an object of suspicion to his employer, was certain, and equally so, that that individual would watch the earliest opportunity of wreaking his vengeance upon him; to protect himself from the effects of which would require the exercise of his best energies.

But setting aside these and personal considerations, Jacques felt that too many interests depended upon the issue of the steps he should take to counteract D'Argenson's machinations, for him to rashly throw away any opportunity of strengthening his actual position, and therefore, determined to act with the greatest caution, in

order not to precipitate a crisis, yet to retaliate by a bolder course, should the emergency require it, satisfied that against an enemy such as his, half-measures would prove abortive, and that to prepare to meet the impending storm, was the only means of breaking its fury, and of averting its fatal consequences.

To render his services more than heretofore indispensable to the Lieutenant of Police, was the first and most material point, but difficult to accomplish, in the face of the suspicious reception which any information would receive that he might thenceforward furnish; still he felt no discouragement, relying upon the extent of his own resources, and upon the vigilance of his Lutetians, to keep D'Argenson wavering between his malice and his interest, until it should become a matter of no importance whether the balance preponderated in favor of the former or of the latter.

That Monsieur D'Argenson should be made the dupe of his own emissaries—more especially of Jacques—will not surprise when it is remembered that only through such channels could he possibly procure intelligence of what was doing in the capital; indeed it was in the very nature of the system of espionage he had established, that he should be its first victim, whensoever it suited the policy or the interests of his agents to deceive him, whilst the expedients resorted to by the latter on such occasions were so numerous, and their plans so admirably organized, as to baffle any attempt at detection. With regard to Jacques, the extraordinary extent of his information in all matters connected with the interior of the city, had often excited D'Argenson's astonishment, although he remained ignorant, nay, even unsuspicious, of the secret means whereby it was obtained: in this ignorance lay Jacques' strength.

But how little soever, be it said, that this individual cared for the Lieutenant of Police, he was not without experiencing some degree of alarm lest the latter should by any chance arrive at the truth, and thus prevent him from attaining the object he had in view when he joined the secret police; an object which he had pursued with untiring energy, though with little success up to the present moment: what that object was will appear in the sequel.

He had reached the Pont de la Tournelle, in front of the magnificent cathedral of Notre Dame, upon which the queen of night now shone in full lustre, darting through its ancient buttresses, brilliant streamlets of light, that quivered like quicksilver amongst its balustrades and niches, and the graven images within them, deepening the immense shadows of its graceful architecture, and adding to the lordliness of its massive towers, which, like twin giants, seemed to be keeping watch over the parent edifice.

Jacques gazed long and silently, upon the sacred pile, alternately directing his eyes downwards upon the smooth surface of the river—in which, the moon, like some coquette, had stooped awhile from her high throne to admire her maiden beauties—then into the clear firmament, where he beheld her holding court, surrounded by multitudes of orbs, twinkling in obeisance—with here and there one, rushing headlong to worship at her feet, leaving in its tract a long train of light.

Of what nature were the thoughts that filled the heart of that strange man? he owned no religion—followed no creed—yet, as he stood at dead of night on that isolated bridge—alone—apart from human kind—communing with nature—his bosom heaved, as his eyes wandered over the heavens, he sighed audibly, and tears trickled down his manly face: he did not kneel, for less, for humbler than he was, he felt he could not be.

Ding dong! ding dong! cling clang! boom! boom! The tom-bell of Notre Dame chimes, two! A pause; and fifty brazen voices, from as many belfries, echo two. Hark! how merrily those sounds peal through the air—first one bell, then another—sailing high above—all confusedly mingling together from every quarter of the great city—leaping madly amongst church-turrets and palaces—breaking into houses—dancing on their sloping roofs and gables, and in and out of their quaint chimnies—rushing down into open squares and narrow streets, crying out, "two! two!" waking people up out of their first sleep—revelling in the quiet and solitude! Ding dong! cling clang! boom! boom! the city is all their own.

Jacques started, quickened his pace, and soon arrived at Maitre Michaulx's: the door flew open before he could knock, for Polyphemus was awaiting his arrival, with his face—or at least the most prominent portion of it—protruding through the grated parallellogram.

The Emperor was greeted on his entry in the halls below, with the acclamations of his Lutetian subjects, a mark of respect which he acknowledged by an inclination of the head, at the same time casting his eyes rapidly around, as if for the purpose of reconnoitring the number. The glance appeared satisfactory, for his features assumed a singular expression of satisfaction, although not amounting to a smile: as he moved towards his accustomed seat at the upper end of the first hall, he held out a hand to St. Marcel, who was seated close by the philosopher, both deeply engaged in the mysteries of the dice-box: they had evidently become upon intimate terms.

"Thou hast won my last crown, friend Marcellus," exclaimed Democritus, throwing down the dice; "there it is! I like to play and pay!" "against ill-fortune, bear up with a stout heart" says the proverb!

"That's true philosophy," responded St. Marcel; "but didst thou say thy last crown?"

"My very last! upon my honour!"

"Then I'll lend thee one to begin again; or twenty if thou wilt; what sayest thou?"

"*Nolo!*" answered the philosopher, declining the proffered gift; "I never borrow!"

"I'll *give* thee thy crowns again then," remonstrated St. Marcel, apparently bent upon seducing his friend, to try fortune again; "I can but win them back!"

Democritus laughed and shook his head.

"Come," said St. Marcel; "try! let us see whether the luck will turn!" and he rattled the dice in the box.

But the philosopher remained inexorable, dashing his fist down, as much as to intimate his determination not to be tempted.

"I'll tell thee what I'll do," resumed the other, despairing at his companion's firmness; "here are fifty crowns which I have won from thee! Now I will throw against myself, whether I shall give them to thee back or not!"

"A gamester to the core," observed the philosopher, draining a goblet; "go on, Marcellus, since thou wilt have it so."

"Well then, here goes for *thee*, friend Democritus," cried St. Marcel, throwing out the dice; "*six deux!* that's bad! And here's for me! ah! ah! ah! thou hast lost again! *six trois!*"

"I hope thou art satisfied," resumed the other: "thou hast it all thine own way."

"I would offer to play thee for thy clothes," exclaimed St. Marcel, laughing, and scrutinizing the philosopher's toilet, which, as will be remembered, was by no means remarkable for elegance, or good condition—"only that the fashion of them is somewhat peculiar."

Democritus did not appear to take his friend's banter in ill part: on the contrary, the allusion caused him to burst into a loud fit of merriment, which evidently owed its origin less to the remark itself, than to some circumstance connected with it; St. Marcel, however, attributing the philosopher's mirth to the sally, joined in it with the heartiness of a man determined to enjoy his own joke, and finally pledged Democritus in a bumper.

"It has often struck me," said he, addressing his philosophic friend, and depositing his goblet upon the bench, across which they straddled, having converted the same to the use of a temporary table, "that thy story must be very diverting! Thou hast not always followed thy present avocation?"

Democritus returned no answer to this indirect question, other than was conveyed by his smile, and the exhibition of his small, white hands to the eyes of his interrogator.

"Yes," resumed the latter; "but if thou art of gentle blood, as thou would'st intimate, methinks thy hands were better employed in wielding the sword of thy ancestors than the implements of thy craft."

"My what, friend Marcellus?"

"The implements of thy craft! I mean, thy hook and basket!"

"My craft, eh, friend Marcellus?" rejoined Democritus, with a look, which betrayed some contempt at his companion's lack of penetration.

"Aye, thy craft! Art thou not a *chiffonnier?*"

"Bah!" ejaculated the philosopher, petulantly.

"Well, well! I knew I was mistaken," observed St. Marcel; "and I am glad of it, for although, friend Democritus, I have a very great respect for thee—for thee, mind—thy uniform is not exactly *the* thing: it quite puts my friendship to the blush; that's positive."

"It is *rather* undress, I admit," rejoined the philosopher, conning, with ludicrous gravity the numerous rents in his garments: "my shoes, to begin with, are not twins—" he wore a boot and a shoe—"then my coat is rather a loose fit—not like thine, which looks like thine own skin, embroidered, with a wrinkle under thy ribs, for thy sword to hang in—my waistcoat again, is out of fashion—I think 'tis of the time of

Louis Douze, not to mention my—" here Democritus threw up his legs, the exhibition of which, in almost their primitive state, occasioned the friends to indulge in another laugh, which was drowned, like many of its predecessors, in another bumper. "But come," continued he, "I think thou art a right sort of fellow, friend Marcellus; give me thy hand; 'tis long since I met with one so much after my own mind; and since thou art curious to learn my story, I promise to give it thee: but not now; we will choose a more favourable opportunity. Hush! the Emperor is going to speak!"

The individual alluded to, had been engaged during the above colloquy between St. Marcel and the ragged philosopher, in close conference with some two or three of his associates, which, from the earnestness of their gestures, appeared to be of an important nature; when Democritus spoke, the spy held his hand raised, as if for the purpose of imposing silence; having thus attracted the attention of the majority, he filled a large goblet with wine, and raising it above his head, exclaimed in a sonorous voice:

"Lutetia! Success to her friends; perdition to her foes;" which toast given, he emptied the vessel at a draught.

His example was imitated by his companions, and for a few moments, nothing was heard save the clashing of pitchers and drinking-cups, intermingled with fifty voices, reiterating the toast:

"Lutetia! Success to her friends; perdition to her enemies!"

Another sign of the hand, on the part of Jacques, caused silence to reign throughout the hall, which he a second time interrupted:

"Friends," said he, elevating his voice; "are there none here but good and true Lutetians? None but have sworn to observe our laws, and to hold sacred the laws of Lutetia?"

"*I* have sworn nothing," shouted St. Marcel, in the midst of the pause that succeeded this allocution; "I acknowledge no laws save those of His Most Christian Majesty Louis Quatorze; and as for keeping the secrets of Lutetia, I had better depart before you divulge them, for if they are against the duty I owe to the laws of my country, I warn you before hand, not to let me into them; for no oath shall bind *me* to keep them sacred."

There was something so manly and open in this avowal, that a murmur of approbation arose, which not even the Emperor's energetic gestures could subdue; it soon burst into a shout, "St. Marcel for ever!" that threatened to make its way through the ponderous roof into the street above.

"St. Marcel for ever!" cried Democritus again, after the shout had subsided, elevating a drinking-horn upon the end of his iron-shod stick, and imparting to the same a rotary movement: "St. Marcel for ever, I say! Our Emperor for ever! Lutetia for ever! Every body for ever! Huzza! Huzza!"

Whether the spirited manner in which the philosopher delivered himself of this sentiment owed its origin to the wine he had imbibed, is not so certain as that his companions appeared simultaneously desirous of emulating the example set them, of rendering justice to the sentiments of their newly-inducted brother; for there suddenly rose,

above the heads of the company, an army of drinking-cups, goblets, hats and hands, waving in every direction, whilst from every side burst fresh cries of:

"St. Marcel for ever! Our Emperor and Lutetia for ever! Huzza! Huzza!"

The object of this compliment meanwhile looked around him in the utmost astonishment, vainly attempting to arrive at the reason of the uproar; Jacques perceived his embarrassment, and once more making himself heard, exclaimed:

"Friends! brother Lutetians; this is well! St. Marcel," continued he, next addressing that individual, "thou seest that we can appreciate a noble spirit. I am thy sponsor here, and will answer to our friends, for thy secrecy. Know, that we break no established laws—we uphold them: therefore fear not."

"I am satisfied, Sieur Jacques," responded St. Marcel, resuming his seat, and looking forward with some anxiety to the issue of these preliminaries.

"Are there none here but good and true Lutetians?" once more asked the spy: "none but have sworn to observe our laws, and to hold sacred the secrets of Lutetia?"

A dead silence succeeded.

"Then, friends, the sign," resumed the Emperor.

Here the fraternity of spies, dividing themselves into sections of three, joined hands in a peculiar manner, and whispering, exchanged certain words constituting their secret token of recognition, which ceremony concluded, they resumed their former position.

There was something imposing in the character of this scene—in the determined silence of that body of men, congregated beneath the very foundations of a large metropolis—there, in that ancient palace, the ruins of a former age—in the heart of the city erewhile belonging to the Cæsars of Gaul, which failed not to produce a deep impression upon St. Marcel. It was to be in another world, yet to retain the remembrance of a former state: a transmigration into the realms of darkness, peopled by spirits still belonging to the world above—having kindred associations with it, yet visiting it only as shades of the departed—rising as it were from a living tomb, and sinking into it again, only half forgotten. Every thing tended to heighten the illusion: the time—the locality—the half-light thrown on the group by the smouldering torches—the peculiar expression of those sombre countenances—the associations with which those halls were replete—the aspect of the man whose authority was so implicitly obeyed by that heterogeneous assemblage—the very mystery that enshrouded his actions—all this—notwithstanding St. Marcel's compunction at having become a member of so formidable a society—possessed a charm that was irresistible: he folded his arms and looked on in silence.

Upon a sign from Jacques, Democritus, assisted by one of his companions, proceeded to clear the table that stood in the middle of the hall, whilst a third, placing at the head thereof, a small raised platform, surmounted it with the old carved chair; the spy then

seated himself on the throne thus raised, and selecting twelve of the assembled members, these took up their position at the table before him, their companions resuming their respective seats.

"In the name of His Most Christian Majesty Louis Quatorze," said he, in a clear and distinct voice, "I, Julian, elected Emperor of the Lutetians, do now call a council for the consideration of the affairs of our state."

"*Vive le Grand Monarque!* Lutetia for ever!" once more echoed through the ancient halls.

As this sentiment was perfectly loyal, St. Marcel responded to it with an earnestness that fairly rivalled that of his companions, for which demonstration he was immediately rewarded by a look of encouragement from Democritus, who had once more ensconced himself by his side, with a pitcher, newly replenished with wine, and to which he at the same time pointed very significantly.

"Fort-de-Bras," exclaimed Jacques, calling to a short, powerful, square-set man, habited in a smith's apron, dark grey breeches, blue striped stockings and heavy shoes, with high heels and large buckles, and who had taken up his position in a remote corner, where he had hitherto remained, unobserved.

"That's Vulcan," whispered Democritus to his friend, pointing to the individual so designated, as he advanced towards the throne; "the Emperor calls him Fort-de-Bras, because of his strength; he'll fell you an ox with a single blow of his fist."

"He is a smith, if I mistake not," remarked St. Marcel."

"Yes!" replied the philosopher; "his forge is in the Rue St. Antoine; not far from the Bastile."

"Well, Fort-de-Bras," said Jacques: "so thou wert sent for yesterday by St. Marc."

"Yes," responded Vulcan, doffing his cap; "and for a job that'll turn out hard enough upon somebody or other, I warrant!"

"Another secret closet?" asked the Emperor.

"Why, there was something in that way," resumed the other, "but I was'nt sent for to make another—only to alter the spring of the old one: that's all!"

"But thou did'st not do it," observed Jacques, rather surprised, and marvelling at his recent escape.

"How did'st thou know that?" quickly responded Vulcan; "for as thou sayest, I didn't alter it, because I had to make a new one which won't be ready 'till to-morrow!"

"Let me see thee after 'tis fixed, Fort-de-Bras; I shall have a word or two to say to thee upon this matter. What else did'st thou do?"

"Why," rejoined the burly smith, passing a corner of his leathern apron across his mouth, "the Governor was going, as I suppose, to make use of the cage, but didn't find it strong enough: thank'ee! every man to his opinion; they were famous hands in those times, I promise you, at making such machines: but as I was saying, the Governor didn't find it strong enough, and so he told me to add a bar or two—and a spike in the top—in case my individual should

take a fancy to stand up in it—I suppose, which he'd have a hard matter to do, too, seeing I couldn't sit upright to do the job."

"Is that all, Maitre Fort-de-Bras?" asked the spy.

"All?" observed that individual, with emphasis; "yes! that's all! Only to think that I, Jean Bourliquet," continued he, in a lower tone, as though he were soliloquizing, "should ever come to the torture!"

The Emperor repeated the smith's last words with astonishment, which the latter observing, said:

"Yes! the torture! isn't it as bad, lending one's hand to a devil's invention like that? and then to think that it's to put a poor fellow creature into—that's the worst of it! However—" he did not end the sentence, but the jerk of the head that accompanied it, intimated his having attempted to ease his conscience at the expense of St. Marc's credulity.

Again Jacques repeated the last word, adding "*what*" thereto, with a view to induce the smith to continue his narration.

"Why," resumed Bourliquet, "if the poor devil that's confined in it, don't find a way to get out and in as he pleases, it's not *my* fault, that's all;" and here his fat sides, shook with laughter, and the tears ran from his eyes in streams down his cheeks, although not a muscle of his face moved.

"There's a man for thee," whispered Democritus to St. Marcel; "a human heart shut up in an anvil? Here's long life to him!"

This sentiment was honoured by an appeal to the pitcher, in which St. Marcel joined.

"What reward did St. Marc promise thee, Fort-de-Bras," demanded the Emperor, "for this handiwork of thine?"

"Twenty crowns when I had completed t'other job, and to shut me up in the cage for a twelvemonth if I didn't hold my tongue; that's all."

"I'll double the sum, friend Fort-de-Bras," resumed Jacques, with an approving nod, and tendering a hand to the honest artizan.

"If I could think the cage would ever serve St. Marc," observed the latter, "I'd put in an extra spike at bottom, besides a few at top! the devil's own invention it is;" saying which he returned to his seat, amidst the greetings of his comrades.

"Sampson le Gros," exclaimed the spy, calling to a second individual, who, on hearing his name mentioned, arose with some difficulty, and with unsteady gait began advancing towards the imperial chair.

"Is Samson his real name?" asked St. Marcel of his friend, pointing with his chin to the personage he mentioned.

"Yes!" replied the philosopher; "and a very good name too; the Emperor always calls him Samson le Gros, but the others call him *le Gros Samson:* I've christened him Hercules—gentle Hercules!"

"I can understand why thou givest him the name of Hercules," said St. Marcel, eyeing the man from top to toe; "but I see nothing particularly gentle in him?"

"Look at him again," retorted his companion.

The subject of their colloquy was meanwhile progressing very

slowly and very irregularly, towards the council-table, smiling and winking at his companions as he passed, who winked and smiled at him in return.

The philosopher did not bestow his names inappropriately, nor, as in this instance, infelicitously, for the individual called Hercules, stood at least three inches taller than Jacques, and might have served as a model to the sculptor.

St. Marcel noted him minutely; his brawny arms half bare—his ample chest, with the collar of his jerkin unfastened, leaving his large neck entirely exposed, shewing the big muscles and veins swollen up like so many leathern thongs—his round head, covered with short, curly black hair—his thick beard, growing in close tufts over nearly the whole of his face, deepening the swarthy hue of his complexion, and imparting a sinister expression to his countenance, which was scarcely relieved by the good-natured twinkling of his dark eyes, and the smile that constantly peeped out from beneath his mustaches: it was to this peculiarity that Democritus alluded.

"Bacchus has overcome Hercules," remarked St. Marcel to the latter, laughing at the unsteadiness of the god, who looked like an ambulating mountain, swayed from side to side by its own bulkiness.

"That's his failing, friend Marcellus," responded Democritus, making another attack upon the pitcher; "but he's the very best tempered comrade for all that, and never quarrels with any body; that's why I call him gentle. He's a mason by trade, and a Burgundian by birth."

"So, friend Samson," observed Jacques to his huge subject; "thou wert at work this morning upon the platform of the Bastile? What's amiss?"

"Why," replied the man, giving a heavy lurch, which unseated one of his companions; "I suppose—at least—hic-cup—that—uc—the master, up yonder—" he here raised his hand—"wanted to know—uc!—what was going on there—and so—uc!—he made a—uc!—a—uc!—made a hole in the roof—uc!"

The spy did not appear to understand the gist of the mason's remarks, but probably thinking that interruption would tend to confuse, rather than elucidate matters, he merely nodded, approvingly, and awaited the sequel.

"And I promise you—uc!" continued Hercules, looking round upon his companions, "the master was—uc!—in earnest: it's a famous kick—uc!—I can tell you! hic-cup!"

"Is the roof much damaged, Maitre Samson?" asked the Emperor.

"Oh! for the—uc!—matter of tha—at," resumed Samson, steadying himself, "there's a—a bit—of a hole, just big enough to—uc!—let me through into—uc!—the *calotte*—but a—uc!—a famous kick—uc!—though, for all that! uc! It's a pity—uc! that the Governor wasn't—uc!—on duty there—uc!—instead of the—uc!—sentinel!"

"Why so, friend Samson?"

"Because, our Emperor, d'ye—uc! d'ye see—he'd have had a—a—uc! bad quarter of an hour of it—uc! seeing that—uc! the poor devil—uc! of a sentinel wouldn't—uc! have been killed! uc!"

"Hast thou completed the repairs?" asked Jacques.

"*Huisht!*" retorted Samson; "there's a week's—uc—work! uc! at least."

"How much art thou to have for the job?"

"If the Governor, uc! pays me in the same coin, uc! as he did for the last work, uc! that I did there, uc! I shan't wear a hole, uc! in my pouch, uc! with the weight of his crowns! uc! seeing that I got, uc! just nothing! uc! and was glad to—uc! get away into the bargain; uc!"

"How was that, Samson?" asked the spy.

"Why, uc! d'ye see, when I'd worked the hole, uc! into the wall—and pretty hard work it was, uc! I can tell you! he says to me, uc! I promised thee thirty crowns, uc! friend Samson—ah! uc! he said friend Samson—the uc! the old fox! uc! says I, uc! that's just the sum to a sou, uc, your Governorship! uc! and it's well earnt, uc! for the stone, d'ye see, uc, is as hard, uc, as hard—"

Samson was quite at a loss to remember his simile, for after hesitating awhile, he passed his hand across his forehead, and without concluding his last sentence, continued—"and so, uc, he answers, well, friend Samson, uc! I shan't pay thee! uc! Not pay me, says I; uc! No, says he, uc! again; art thou not satisfied? uc! and he looked—uc, very hard at the guard, uc! Yes! your Governorship, uc, says I to him once more—another time 'll do as well; uc! Well, then says he, again, uc, thou may'st go, friend Samson, uc! much obliged, uc, thinks I; but if ever I, uc, catch him outside of his—uc—den—won't I—uc—that's all."

Samson elevated his clenched hand, and whirling it round over his head, dashed it upon the table with such force, that the glasses, cups, and pitchers, rebounded from it and leaped up in the air, falling down again in all directions, shivered to atoms.

"Gentle Hercules!" whispered St. Marcel to the philosopher; in answer to which, the latter laughed, slily winked his eye, and tossed off another bumper; when, perceiving that the pitcher was empty, he assumed a look of comic gravity, shook his head, and watching his opportunity, exchanged the empty vessel, for one that had just been refilled by an egotistical neighbour, ensconced in a near corner.

"If St. Marc does not pay thee for thy work," observed Jacques to the mason, "I will."

"Not a bit of it, uc!" retorted the latter; "right is right, uc! as we say in Burgundy; he shall pay me yet; uc! never fear! uc! But there would'nt be any harm, uc! our Emperor, in your lending me a few crowns, uc! seeing that with such bad customers, uc! a man can't get very rich, uc!"

"Here are thirty," said the spy, tendering the man the money; "when St. Marc pays thee thou can'st return them."

"Our Emperor, for ever," shouted Samson, spinning round upon one heel; "our Emperor for ever! uc! and only let any body deny it—uc—that's all! I'll make it my business—uc! Hoora! Hoo! hoo! Yup! yup! ya! ya! tral lal lal lal la! Ohé!" and indulging in a multiplicity of gyrations upon his own axis, interspersed with a

variety of shouts peculiar to his province, the Burgundian returned to his seat, where he shortly after fell asleep.

An individual called Pommier was next summoned before the spy; he was short in stature, but round as a butt, with a face, which looked like a full moon labouring under an attack of erysipelas.

"That's the Père Pommier," observed Democritus, whispering as before to his companion, "who keeps the *cabaret* called the '*Grappe de Raisins*,' (Bunch of Grapes), at the corner of the Rue des Tournelles: I call him Bacchus!"

"Anything new, Pommier?" asked Jacques.

"Seven in since yesterday morning," replied the man.

"Men or women," resumed the spy.

"All, men," answered the vintner.

"Dost thou know any of them?"

"Only one! poor fellow!"

"Who is he?"

"Why, a neighbour of mine; Jean-Baptiste-Poisson, our grocer; keeps the Sugar-loaf on the Boulevard."

"Hast thou learnt the reason of his imprisonment?"

"Reason! I ask any body now if there's any reason in sending a man to the Bastile for only speaking his mind to his neighbours."

"To the point, Père Pommier," exclaimed Jacques.

"Well! it happened like this," said the vintner, prefacing his story by two or three hearty hems; "I was standing at my door this morning, when I saw the poor fellow go by, between a couple of soldiers! Hola! cries I to the wife! if they aren't taking poor Jean-Baptiste to the Bastile! And his poor wife, says she to me, that's so near with her second—thou must go see what it's all about, father! Yes, says I; and so I went! It was enough to break a man's heart to see the poor woman how she raved; and her dear little child, that's just a month older than our last—crying and screaming all the while, and the neighbours looking on with the great tears dropping out of their eyes just like water-spouts—its true, every word of it. Mus'nt give way says I, dame Poisson, as soon as she saw me; we're men d'ye see, and it sha'nt end like this—"

Here arose a murmur of voices that interrupted the vintner in his recital; it was, however, immediately silenced by Jacques, who motioned the narrator to continue.

"I'm sure, says she, wiping her eyes with her apron, and kissing the child, that its all through the man we saw yesterday morning: I saw him look at Jean-Baptiste, and I said then, that something bad would come of it! Of what, dame? says I. Of his speaking his mind so freely about the Bastile, says she; he called it a wicked place, and said it ought to be burnt."

"Down with the Bastile! Down with the Bastile!" exclaimed a score of voices: but again the spy succeeded in silencing the tumult.

"So I say, too," continued the vintner, becoming animated; "it is a disgrace to us to let it stand! Only to think that any man may be sent there for saying what comes uppermost in his mind; just like neighbour Poisson."

"And who was the man Jean-Baptiste's wife saw?" asked the spy.

"Monseigneur D'Argenson," replied Pommier; "for he was soon recognized by the crowd—you must know they had assembled to look at the thunder-cloud that was hanging over the Bastile, and he got amongst them before they knew it; Jean-Baptiste wouldn't believe it, at first—and laughed at his friends when they told him he must take care what he said—for you see he's new to Paris—however, this morning they took him—so it wasn't long first: but as I said before, we are men, and it sha'n't end like this!"

"No! no!" resounded from every side; "down with the Bastile!"

"No precipitation, friends," exclaimed Jacques, in a loud, authoritative tone of voice; "this state of things cannot last—but no precipitation! The Bastile was not built to stand for ever! It must come down; it shall come down; but not yet—we must wait."

"Our Emperor for ever! Lutetia for ever!" again echoed through the halls; a cry in which St. Marcel joined, so much was he excited by the enthusiasm of the assembled multitude.

"Is this a conspiracy?" said he, addressing Democritus; for, notwithstanding his growing attachment to Lutetia, he had not lost sight of his allegiance to Louis Quatorze.

"If it is," responded the philosopher, "thou knowest as much of it as I do; this is the first I have heard of it."

St. Marcel was on the point of hazarding another question, but was interrupted by the spy, who again addressing Pommier, said:

"Thou didst not recognize any body else, eh, friend?"

"No!" replied the vintner; "they were all strangers—peaceful looking citizens; ah, stop! except one, and he was an officer of Musketeers—quite a young man."

St. Marcel pricked up his ears; this was coming nearer home.

"He looked very pale and ill," continued the man; "one would have said he was going in there to die."

"'Tis St. Leu," muttered St. Marcel, hiding his face in his hands: "the Duke has done this."

"I can't think," continued the vintner, "where they put all the prisoners: there's a many more go in than come out, although there's no lack of funerals either."*

At this moment a diversion was created by the sudden entry of a tall, slender individual, breathless with haste, and apparently the bearer of some important communication, for he at once made towards Jacques, paying no attention to the numerous greetings which overwhelmed him on his passage.

The philosopher, attracting St. Marcel's attention—for he remained buried in painful reflection—pointed to the new comer:

"That's our Mercury:" said he: "he used to be a running footman in Louis Quatorze's service—but he found our Emperor's more profitable. He carries intelligence from one to the other, and I dare say he has not come now for nothing."

* It will be remembered that the prisoners who died in the Bastile, were always interred in the church of St. Paul.

thought! He is still at the Archbishop's, and will be in safety until the morning: I have yet two hours to spare; I'll rest awhile; and then—" so saying, he threw himself upon his pallet, and soon fell asleep.

As day broke, a Capuchin of very tall stature, might have been observed in the neighbourhood of Notre Dame, making for the Archbishop's palace. He looked cautiously about, on every side, as though suspicious of being observed, when having satisfied himself that such was not the case, he knocked, and after some little discussion with the porter, was admitted.

Within three hours after, a hired travelling carriage, drove up to the outer gate—a heavy, lumbering vehicle, drawn by two clumsy horses, one of the latter bestrode by a postilion, whose head was ornamented with a queue that reached far below the extremity of his jacket, and whose legs were encased in a pair of boots into either of which he might have nearly inserted his whole body. Into this machine entered, shortly after, first, an individual of short stature, whose features were completely hidden beneath the hood of a Capuchin's frock; he was immediately followed by the tall monk already mentioned, who appeared equally scrupulous of concealment: in another minute the door of the coach was closed upon them, and it rolled rapidly away.

The travellers reached the village of Passy, continuing their route in the direction of Versailles. They had passed through St. Cloud, and left it half a league in their rear, when at a sharp turning in the road, there rushed out from behind the tall poplars that lined it on each side, three soldiers, two of whom stopped the carriage, whilst the third, a lieutenant, stepped up to the door, and began to unfasten it.

"Halloo" exclaimed a voice from within.

"In the name of the King," quickly responded the officer, "I arrest you, Father Pierre Simon."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when a blow from a powerful arm felled him to the earth, and the tall Capuchin leaped from the vehicle into the middle of the road. The officer, in his fall, struck his head against one of the trees, and lay stunned with the violence of the shock. Seeing this, the Capuchin rushed to the aid of the postilion, who was belabouring the soldiers, might and main, with the heavy butt-end of his whip, having twisted the thong round his hand, and seizing the first man by the throat, exclaimed:

"Fly, or beware my displeasure! Lutetia! do ye not know me?"

His hood had fallen back in the struggle, disclosing to the astonished soldiers, the features of the Emperor. One of them immediately took to flight, an example which was followed by his companion though less precipitately.

"Drive on to Versailles as fast as thou can'st," said Jacques to the postilion; "never mind the officer; he's merely stunned:" and leaping into the vehicle, it was soon lost to view.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LOUIS QUATORZE AND HIS MINISTERS. GOVERNMENT EMBARRASSMENTS AND STATE SECRETS.

Some days after these events, Monseigneur D'Argenson received a peremptory summons from the King, to repair to Versailles, and accordingly set out for the *château* on foot—his usual mode of travelling.

He left Paris early—at seven o'clock in the morning; the weather was cold—very cold—for an extraordinary hard frost had suddenly set in the night before, accompanied by a biting north-easter; the sky too was overcast, making the hard earth, covered as it was with ugly fissures, look blacker—the leafless trees more desolate, and every object in nature, colder and more miserable; sparing the traveller even less, the gloominess of the weather imparted additional moroseness to his sullen, forbidding countenance, causing the few whom he met, to shudder, and shrink from coming into contact with his person, whilst the cottager's wife—as the man's quick glance rested upon her—called in her children, and closed the door of her humble dwelling, until he had gone by: yet these, and other marks of fear, though he noticed them, seemed to flatter rather than displease him, and he continued his journey, without paying further attention to the effect his presence created. Yet, as he proceeded, a change imperceptibly came over him which he was unable to account for; from some external cause, his hard features gradually lost a portion of their savage expression—his compressed lips slowly relaxed, almost into a settled smile—his restless eyes looked less maliciously into the visage of the passer-by, and less morosely upon the merry, chubby faced little children that lingered on the threshhold of their parents' dwelling—he had, hitherto, constantly kept them either bent towards the ground, or turned askance—but now, he felt irresistibly impelled to cast them upwards! How light he became all at once! There was the sun, just burst through the dark atmosphere, shining above in full winter splendour—chasing away the darksome clouds from every side of him, and persisting, in spite of the frost, in looking warm and comfortable himself, and making every thing about him as warm and comfortable as the season would let him—smiling with a broader smile upon the earth, as he rose, higher and higher in the heavens, and causing every object in nature to put on a more cheerful face, in return for that smile of his: now he dallied with the tall trees, who jealous of his favor, caught at his rays, seeking in vain to rob humbler shrubs of their share of his warm embraces, as he stooped to caress their naked limbs! How his genial beams played amongst the leafless twigs—insinuating themselves through the hedge-rows, making the hoar-frost sparkle

like minute diamonds, with all the hues of the rainbow! How inquisitively that bright sun peeped into the humble shed, cheering the peasant's early meal, who welcomed his presence with smiles, whilst the effeminate owner of yonder lordlier mansion denied him admittance, and shut him out by close-drawn curtains and shutters, and the more recently introduced *jalousies*. The very birds, revelling in the sun-light, and hopping from sprig to sprig, chirped and twittered to one another as though they had commenced a new existence, and were bent upon letting every body into the secret, that every body might feel as happy as themselves: was it this—the smiling aspect of nature—that affected the sullen traveller? that made him *almost* smile? it must have been—for his thoughts were foreign to kindliness—and dark and gloomy as was the morning when he set out on his journey.

He reached St. Cloud, and stopping at the guard-house, summoned the two men who had accompanied their lieutenant to effect the arrest of the Capuchin.

"What's thy name?" said he, addressing the first.

"Thomas Blondeau," answered the man: "but my comrades call me Bottlenose."

"What's thine?" continued the Lieutenant, speaking to the second.

"Denis, our lieutenant," replied the latter, raising his hand to the side of his head; "Denis Mouton is *my* name; isn't it Bottle-nose?"

The gentleman rejoicing in this facetious cognomen, which he owed to a peculiarity of visage, induced by his frequent libations—answered in the affirmative, and the Lieutenant of Police continued his interrogations.

"Denis knows a good deal more about it than I do," said Blondeau; "for as I turned my back upon the robbers, I couldn't see what happened; could I Denis?"

"How should you?" replied Denis; "for my own part I found that the enemy was superior in number, and so, like a good general, I beat a retreat: didn't I, Bottlenose?"

The Lieutenant frowned, and swore a tremendous oath, which, however, did not in the least disturb the equanimity either of Denis or his comrade—probably because swearing was something professional—and consequently quite in their own line—having thus relieved his mind, D'Argenson continued:

"No trifling, fellows; *sang dieu!* tell me all, Denis, and quickly."

The man drew himself up very stiffly, and casting—unperceived by the Lieutenant of Police, a particularly suggestive glance upon his comrade—began:

"I can't say who was in the carriage, Lieutenant, but I know that whilst I and my comrade were securing the horses, the robbers fell upon us and put us *hors-de-combat*: didn't they Bottle-nose?"

"How many were there?" asked D'Argenson, doubtingly, and addressing the latter individual, who appeared much perplexed to answer his question—evidently because he did not anticipate so close a cross-examination.

"More than three, I'll swear," said he, after a sly look at Denis; "weren't there comrade?"

"There were four, Monseigneur," observed Denis, "I couldn't be mistaken, because three of 'em attacked me; didn't they Bottlenose?"

"Pshaw!" ejaculated D'Argenson, impatiently: and all the time suspecting that they had trumped up the tale in order to cover their own cowardice, he called to the captain of the guard. "Officer," continued he, "place these men under arrest, and consign them to the black-hole for a week: *tonnerre dieu!* nobody shall deceive me with impunity."

Denis and his companion were immediately marched off to the black-hole, their commanding officer fearing to disobey the mandate of D'Argenson, who, having seen his orders executed, departed, uttering a volley of oaths, and strongly suspecting that he had been made the dupe of some artifice which he was, as yet, unable to fathom; indeed, the Lieutenant's report, embodying besides a tolerable description of his assailant, the simple, though important fact, of the vehicle containing two monks, almost furnished him with a clue to the truth, notwithstanding that he could neither comprehend how Jacques—if the second monk was, as he conjectured, that extraordinary man disguised—had obtained intelligence of the Capuchin's intended arrest, nor his motives for rescuing the holy father, from the fate he had reserved for him—the Bastile: this mystery, however, he determined forthwith to unravel, and continued his journey, absorbed in no very pleasant train of thought.

He reached the *château* at the appointed hour, and was instantly ushered into the presence of the Grand Monarque, whom he found alone in his bed-chamber, seated at a small table covered with papers, and evidently a prey to some annoyance, for his brow was clouded, and his countenance more than usually grave: when D'Argenson entered, he pointed to a vacant stool, and motioned him to be seated.

Kings—that is to say, those whom nature has marked out for such—are said to be born with their title engraven on their brow: it would doubtless prove a delicate task to decide how many out of the present race of monarchs—were monarchs elective—could abide the issue of such a test, but Louis Quatorze certainly bore off the palm in his day and verified the adage, for in air and mien, he was the very impersonation of kingliness, and masculine beauty.

Although now in his sixty-second year, age had not robbed him of an inch of his commanding stature, nor shrunken the symmetry of his form: his forehead was all that a Lavater (had physiognomy then been known as a science) would have expected to find in a king: expansive, well-developed, unwrinkled, and pale as marble, with two broad arches distinctly defined, beneath which his dark eyes still sparkled with all the fire of youth, his gaze retaining a potency that few could withstand: his aquiline nose and firm-set mouth, imparted an expression of severity to his countenance that was rather increased than diminished by the sallowness of his com-

plexion, adding to the dignity of his aspect, which betrayed the self-consciousness of his superiority: one might fancy how he must have looked when he uttered that axiom to his courtiers, "I am the State!" which has since become the by-word of absolute monarchs.

Perhaps no sovereign of modern times, not even his cousin and early contemporary Charles the Second of England—can be said to have been, at one time, more truly great—great in his public capacity, be it understood—than Louis Quatorze! From the day that he assumed the reins of government—he was then twenty-two years of age—until within the last fifteen years of his life, his career was one uninterrupted series of victories and brilliant achievements. At the death of Mazarin, he found his court split into factions—his courtiers ripe for intrigue—each of his ministers eager to grasp at supreme power, at the expense of his country, none dreaming that the young man whom the astute Cardinal had purposely brought up in ignorance, would ever take the sceptre into his own hands, and govern by himself. So far indeed were they from apprehending such an event, that on the death of the prime minister, Mazarin, they did not even consult the King upon the choice of the Cardinal's successor; their mortification was as great as their presumption, and when the youthful monarch peremptorily intimated that he would be his own prime minister, his resolution, not less than his subsequent perseverance in it, taught them that the reign of favoritism had passed away.

In her Memoirs, Madame de Motteville states that in this respect, Louis Quatorze only emulated the example of Charles the Second, who was then reputed as governing alone: the parallel between the two monarchs need not be drawn to prove that if such was the case, Louis Quatorze soon outshone his rival.

His first act was to regulate the financial department of his government, and to circumscribe the limits of his ministers' power, allotting severally to each, his various duties—compelling each to render him, at certain fixed periods, an account of his acts; and superintending, himself, every branch of the administration: to establish the army upon a broader footing, was his next care, whilst the arts and sciences, manufactures and trade, each in turn received their due meed of his attention, so that his kingdom soon regained all that it had lost during the civil wars under the Regency of his mother.

The period too, favoured his ambition of reigning as an absolute monarch, for there were no ancient factions to subdue—the religious leagues of the time of Henri Quatre—the Fronde—the parliamentary disputes of the regency—all these were virtually dead, or existing in spirit, but devoid of body—whilst the modern cabals that arose on the death of Mazarin, were mere insignificant struggles for individual preeminence: the nation, besides, was tired of party squabbles—parliamentary warfares—ministerial leagues and cabals, and more disgusted still with church government; the very idea of a prime-minister, even to the name of one, had become odious, for the public treasury had been exhausted by the extravagancies of Richelieu, and the avarice of Mazarin, neither of whom ever failed to augment the taxation when-

ever the coffers of the one required replenishing, or the princely extravagancies of the other had plunged him into difficulties from which money alone could extricate him: but the ruin they commenced, was completed by the systematic peculations of Touquet, the Superintendent of the Finance department, who, at last expiated his crimes in the Bastile:*—thus at Louis' accession—his *real* accession to power—France had become a nation consisting only of subjects, willing to be governed by a despotic master, yet by no other than a regal one; Henri Quatre had governed them absolutely, and Louis Quatorze was emulous of his ancestor's glory; ambitious of being accounted great, both at home and abroad: it remains for the historian to transmit his deeds to the judgment of posterity.

At the period, however, of his introduction to the Reader, Louis Quatorze had ceased to be great; his long prosperity had fascinated him into the belief that adversity could not attain him; whereas his decadence had already commenced, and the last fifteen years of his life offered, by the disasters that pursued him, a most painful contrast to the brilliant commencement of his reign: his domestic calamities were perhaps those that did not the least affect him.

Although during his administration, Colbert effected wonders towards renovating the financial condition of the country, and maintained the state in affluence, notwithstanding the luxuriousness of the monarch, the prodigious expenditure of the latter, added to the enormous cost of the long wars in which he engaged, necessarily tended to exhaust the treasury, and drain the country of its resources; thus at Colbert's decease, Le Pelletier, whom the King nominated to the vacant post of Controller-General of the Finance, found the charge too onerous; nor were his successors, Pontchartrain and Chamillart, (and Desmarests after the latter,) more successful in their endeavours to save the State from the insolvency with which it was threatened.

But the perplexities of his ministers, and the extraordinary modes of raising funds to which they were compelled to resort in order to provide for the daily-augmenting exigencies of the government, produced no effect upon the voluptuous monarch, whose expensive habits seemed to increase rather than diminish, in the same proportion as the difficulty of administering to them; he had been so long accustomed to luxurious excesses, that to live without indulging in them became almost impossible, as a proof of which may be adduced the fact that there was not, at any period of his reign, more magnificence displayed than towards its close, when the country most groaned beneath the burden of exorbitant taxes and imposts, and its resources, though numerous, were being fast exhausted by the enormous expenses entailed by an unfortunate and desolating war, and that same not less impoverishing splendour of the monarch.†

* This man was, for many years, supposed to be the Iron-mask.

† The statistical tables of the period shew that Louis Quatorze died in debt to the amount of £80,000,000, sterling (4,500,000,000, marcs) and expended during his reign; £3,480 000,000, sterling, (18,000,000,000, marcs.) The estates of the crown, called *domaines de la couronne*, though declared inalienable, were all mortgaged.

His taste for architecture, ornamental gardens, sculpture, paintings &c., though tending to embellish his capital, was ruinous in the extreme; the Louvre, (which to this day is incomplete) Versailles, the Trianons, Marly, owed their origin to his innate passion for magnificence; whilst his pleasures alone, conducted upon the same grand scale, swallowed up more than would have sufficed to perfect the splendid edifices, which for lack of funds he was at last compelled to leave unfinished.

It may be conceived that his many excesses, tended, at length, to enervate his mind; thus as years crept upon him, he grew more and more weary of the labour of superintending public affairs, leaving the direction of them, as much as possible, to his ministers, giving himself up to the pursuit of new pleasures, and when satiated, returning to the company and conversation of Madame de Maintenon. Still he regularly gave audience to all the functionaries of the state; for although his energies were no longer the same, he was equally jealous of his authority as of retaining its semblance; his power remained unaltered; his will alone had grown inert, ever requiring some powerful incentive to rouse it into action.

It was Louis's custom to receive his ministers in his bed-chamber, shortly after he had arisen; this was called, *le petit lever;* the apartment was spacious, looking out upon the splendid gardens, recently completed, and the extensive park adjoining them, every article of furniture being sumptuous and costly in the extreme. The regal bed, which was large and square, was enclosed within a richly gilded balustrade; the hangings—of purple velvet—were embroidered with many curious devices in gold, the spaces left open between which were studded with fleurs-de-lys in silver, whilst around the bottom, and down the sides depended a deep fringe of the former metal; over the top fell a canopy, composed of the same costly materials, and surmounted by the crown and the arms of France, wrought in gold: the linen—for a portion of it remained exposed—was of the very finest textured cambric that could be manufactured, richly ornamented with lace embroidered by the hands of the lace-workers of Venice and Flanders—thirty from the former place, and two hundred from the latter, having been established in France for the express purpose of introducing the art into the country: the coverlet, was of satin, interwoven with silver flowers, of Lyons manufacture—a recent invention—and the carpet around the sides and foot of the bed, from the Gobelins. To the left of the bed, stood a very small table, on which was a crucifix in gold, a *bénitier* (holy-water bowl) of the same metal, and a missal. The ceiling exquisitely painted in fresco, was likewise richly gilt; every object in the apartment itself corresponding in magnificence with its fellow.

The King was in his usual morning dishabille: he wore a loose robe of crimson velvet, profusely embroidered, and a large perruque, arranged so as to fall over his shoulders and back; his cravat—of fine cambric—was tied once round his throat, the two ends

hanging down in front, and which like his ruffles, were of exquisitely wrought lace: over his legs and thighs were drawn long white silk stockings, confined above his knee, by a garter, and fastened by a small diamond buckle; his feet, encased in slippers rested upon a small ottoman, he himself being ensconced in an easy chair, the back whereof was surmounted by the royal arms.

"Chamillart has just left me, Monseigneur," observed the Monarch to D'Argenson, as this functionary dropped into his seat, at the same time inclining his head, respectfully, and placing his triangular beaver upon the table.

"He tells me," continued the Monarch, "that he experiences great difficulty in levying the last tax, and that some of the citizens have refused to pay it!"

"Is my advice needed, Sire, to teach Monsieur Chamillart his duty to his sovereign?" observed D'Argenson.

"I must almost confess as much," replied Louis, half smiling.

"Who are they, Sire, who have refused?"

"There is a list containing their names and residences," answered the King, handing a piece of parchment to the Lieutenant of Police, and looking at him very significantly.

"I understand your Majesty," observed the latter, pocketing the parchment; "I will look after the defaulters."

"But I am in want of money to pay my troops, Monseigneur, and Chamillart has none to give me."

"There is plenty in Paris, Sire! plenty in France!"

"Yes! But how is it to be obtained? evidently not so easily as heretofore!"

"I would guarantee within three months to raise for your Majesty's service, at least four millions of livres," observed D'Argenson, thoughtfully.

"That is a large sum, Monseigneur, as times go! How would you proceed, pray? I am curious to learn."

D'Argenson bowed again, and continued:

"There are at least five hundred commoners in Paris, each as rich as Crœsus, who would gladly purchase the privilege of appearing at your Majesty's court."

"But were each even *twice* as rich as Crœsus," remarked Louis, interrupting him, "unless they were noble also, their riches would not avail them for that purpose."

"Pardon me, Sire; their wealth, which your Majesty so much stands in need of, might be made the means of ennobling them!"

"I comprehend, you, Monseigneur," answered the King, reddening; "you would have me sell patents of nobility, like a shopkeeper sells old clothes; it cannot be! it cannot be!"

"Five hundred patents," continued D'Argenson, taking up a piece of paper, and making his calculations upon it, "at—at—say four thousand crowns each, would produce—"

"But, Monseigneur, consider the disagreeable consequences it must entail! My court would be made up of shop-keepers! Pah!"

"The five hundred patents, Sire, would produce, at four thousand crowns each, a sum equivalent to—"

"Sell patents of nobility!" exclaimed Louis, hesitatingly; "after all, the relief would be only temporary, whilst the shame would be lasting."

"The relief would be your Majesty's," observed D'Argenson; "the shame their's."

"You are right, Monseigneur! You are right!" retorted the King, brightening up, as though all at once charmed with the expedient; "you possess almost as great a financial genius as Colbert."*

"May I request your Majesty to sign these?" suggested the wily Minister, placing before the King a number of slips of parchment, partially engrossed.

"*Lettres-de-cachet!*" ejaculated the Monarch; "it took me more than an hour to affix my signature to the last number you brought me: 'tis really quite a task! But *à propos* of the Bastile, Monseigneur Lieutenant, I am given to understand that you hold imprisoned there, the daughter of a certain Baron de St. Auney! Her friends have interested themselves to procure her release, and I have promised to command it."

D'Argenson frowned and bit his lips, inclining his head to conceal his mortification, but after a few moments silence, answered, with an affected air of humility:

"Since I have had the honour of holding my present office, I think Sire, that I have fulfilled the duties of it, at least as well as my predecessor."

"Better, Monseigneur; better;" replied Louis; "our city of Paris was never so well cleansed and lighted as now—never so free of thieves and vagabonds—you are invaluable to us Monseigneur; invaluable!"

"I have at least done my best to deserve your Majesty's favour," continued the Minister; "but from this moment I retain my office only until you, Sire, shall have found another of your subjects worthier of it than I am."

This unexpected announcement startled the King like an electric shock—he started up from his recumbent position, and sitting upright in his chair, with a hand placed on each of its arms, gazed for at least a minute, full into D'Argenson's face, but without uttering a word, the latter returning his glance with equal steadfastness—indeed one would have said he had never blinked in his life—at length his Majesty observed, in rather a faltering tone:

"Did I hear aright, Monseigneur?"

"I cannot say, Sire," replied the artful Lieutenant, "whether your Majesty *did* hear aright; but it will be no trouble to me to repeat—"

"You hinted at resigning your post as Lieutenant of our police, Monseigneur," abruptly resumed Louis, with darkening brows; "for what reason?"

* In 1700, upwards of 600 patents of nobility were sold at four thousand crowns each.—*(Voltaire.)*

"Simply, Sire, because I cannot discharge its important duties, if my official actions are to be cancelled by your Majesty, whenever it suits the views of any idle meddler to interfere with measures that appertain to my especial province, and respecting the enforcement of which I must be the most competent judge."

"I have heard the whole story, Monseigneur, from a party who is seemingly well informed; I am, however, ready to listen to your reasons for keeping the girl imprisoned: it seems to me that such a course cannot be justified."

"I detained her, Sire, as an hostage for her father, whom I can prove a traitor—whom I can prove guilty of disrespect towards your Majesty's government—but, worse than all, of forgery! See! this bond! signed by one St. Angin! 'tis for a hundred thousand crowns—it was forced upon Etienne Quinault, late public notary of this city, and now a judge in one of your Majesty's courts—the man whose signature is affixed here—to the bottom of this parchment—is dead, Sire! dead! With the money extorted from Quinault, the Baron discharged my claim upon him for monies advanced, and then came to the Bastile to claim his daughter; but fortunately I was prepared to receive him."

"This indeed changes the aspect of the affair, Monseigneur Lieutenant," observed the monarch, thoughtfully, "what has become of the Baron?"

"He is in the Bastile, Sire! I detained him!"

"You did well, Monseigneur! but his daughter! You must set her free!"

"If I am to retain my office, Sire," responded D'Argenson, "I will *not* set her free, until her father has confessed his guilt, or divulged his accomplice—for that he has one, I more than suspect."

"You are the best judge in these matters, Monseigneur," remarked the King, with great indifference; "but I hope she does not lack for anything."

"Except her liberty, Sire, she has all that she requires."

"I am satisfied, Monseigneur! Retain your office, and act as seems to you best, to bring all such offenders to justice."

"Perhaps your Majesty will sign this warrant for their detention during your Majesty's royal pleasure," observed the Lieutenant of Police, rapidly filling up a blank paper according to the usual form, and presenting it to the monarch for signature; "I shall then be acting under your Majesty's orders."

Louis Quatorze made no reply, but dipping his pen slightly into the ink, signed the document and returned it to his Minister.

"How you tremble, Monseigneur," observed he, as D'Argenson tendered his hand for the fatal parchment: "one would think you had seen me sign your own death-warrant!"

The Lieutenant of Police essayed to smile, but could not: his lips quivered and two or three large drops of cold sweat trickled down his yellow forehead as he folded the paper up, and placed it in his pocket: his agitation, however, was but mo-

mentary, and did not prevent him from responding to the King's remark:

"I do tremble, Sire; your Majesty's confidence overpowers me."

Louis looked very hard at the Minister, as though much astonished to discover that he possessed so large an amount of susceptibility, and then attacked a small box of sweat-meats that laid by his side: the negative tendency of his belief, could not have been more pointedly expressed.

"I have disagreeable intelligence for your Majesty," continued D'Argenson, remarking the monarch's action; "St. Marc informs me that—" here he lowered his voice—"the Iron-Mask has again committed himself."

At the mention of that mysterious man's name, the countenance of Louis Quatorze underwent a marked alteration; it became alternately pale and flushed, and his brows contracted convulsively together, whilst his whole frame shook as with the palsy:

"What! what has occurred?" asked he tremulously.

D'Argenson recounted the tale told him by the Governor of the Bastile respecting the man's attempt to communicate with the exterior, and handed him the notes found by the sentinels, terminating his recital by informing the King what instructions he, D'Argenson, had given to St. Marc, commanding a stricter surveillance of his mysterious captive.

The monarch listened with profound emotion to the Minister's account, and having perused the billets, tore them up into tiny fragments, when, motioning to D'Argenson, the latter threw them into the fire, watching them until they were entirely consumed; he then resumed his seat:

"Unfortunate, ill-fated man!" exclaimed the King, sighing deeply; "the punishment of thy mother's crime has fallen heavily indeed upon thee! But 'tis better so!" and a tear rolled down his flushed cheek as he thus gave expression to his inmost thoughts.

"*Pater est quem nuptiæ demonstrant!*" ejaculated D'Argenson, sententiously.*

Louis Quatorze started as if some venemous reptile had stung his foot: he became painfully affected, trembling convulsively—evidently struggling to obtain the mastery over the intense emotion that the remark had excited—covering his face with both hands, he remained a few moments, silent; when he removed them, it had assumed its wonted calmness, but there was a severity in its expression, as in the tone of his voice, that chilled the Minister to the heart:

"Yes! that is the terrible secret, indeed, Monseigneur," said the Monarch; "the whole secret of his unhappy destiny! But beware how thou lettest it escape thy lips!"

"The solemn oaths by which I am bound, Sire, would alone set a seal on my tongue—"

"Yes! yes!" resumed Louis, still intensely excited; "'twas ne-

* "He is the father, whom the marriage proves;" was an axiom in the French law of succession; the word *pater*, here signified, "*the elder or eldest born.*"

cessary for thee to know it—but 'twere death to another! alas! that it must be so!"

The solemnity of the monarch's grief, as he uttered this last sentence, produced a painful impression—though only a transitory one—upon the flinty Minister, who, ashamed of the indiscretion of which he had been guilty, hastened to cast himself at his royal master's feet:

"Pardon, Sire!" said he, in a deprecatory tone; "pardon the allusion; it was involuntary."

"Rise, Monseigneur," replied the magnanimous Monarch, with a gesture and a look full of dignity: "I have nothing to pardon! leave me—unless you have any thing more to communicate!"

D'Argenson, falteringly answered in the negative, and bowing to the King, quitted his presence with a dogged air—much mortified and chap-fallen at his peremptory dismissal.

As he left the apartment, Louis ejaculated:

"Would that I could find an honest man to take his place!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CALOTTE OF THE BERTAUDIÈRE TOWER: ST. LEU MAKES ACQUAINTANCE WITH SOME OF HIS PREDECESSORS THEREIN.

Let us now return to the unfortunate inmates of the Bertaudière.

St. Leu was suffered to remain, only a very few hours, in the den to which the Governor's satellites consigned him, immediately after his forcible separation from Julie; but so overwhelmed was he by the heavy calamity that had befallen him, that he fell into a state of stupor, from which he was only awakened by the abrupt entry of Ru and Corbé, who came to conduct him to another chamber.

The latter preceded him up the three flights of stairs that led to the *calotte*—his new abode—Ru, holding a lighted torch, bringing up the rear; almost mechanically, St. Leu followed his guides, until they arrived at the iron-plated door that formed the outer limit of his future dwelling, when they exchanged places, Corbé taking the torch from Ru, and falling behind, whilst the latter, in his capacity of *porte-clefs*, unlocked the door of the dungeon, and ushered them into it.

Up to this moment, not a word had been uttered by either party, but as soon as they had entered, Corbé bowed very low, and extending one hand, to which he imparted a circular motion, observed:

"This is Monsieur's apartment."

His harsh voice made St. Leu's blood run cold, immediately rendering him aware of the horrors of his position; the torch—which Corbé had managed to insert, horizontally, into a hole in the masonry—shed

a very dim light around, yet dim as that light was, it sufficed to expose the den in all its sombre and filthy proportions.

It was of octagonal form, having in the middle a circular space not exceeding six feet in circumference—bounded by eight small arches supporting the roof; in one of these—the one to the right, next to the door—was a trestle bed, the foot of which considerably infringed upon the spare territory in the middle of the cell; in the one to the left, stood a small table, and a chair, both in the very last stage of the rickets; a third—to the left again of the latter—had been converted into a fireplace, the chimney being formed by a layer of stone-work carried up to an aperture above, through which the constructor had intended the smoke to escape; his benevolent intentions, however, had subsequently been frustrated by the fastidiousness of the sentinels on the platform, who finding the proximity of the funnel that served as a chimney-pot, to a certain degree inconvenient, had contrived ingeniously to block up the aperture, so as to force the pungent vapour to seek egress through some other channel; in a fourth niche were placed an earthen pitcher and a few logs of wood; between the fifth and sixth, a small aperture—a longitudinal slit of about a foot or more in width, and perhaps four feet in length—served as a window, being attained by three steps—and directly facing it, between the seventh and eighth recesses, stood the doorway.

St. Leu looked around him, clasping his hands in an agony of grief that deprived him of the power of utterance; Corbé noticed the disgust that his countenance too evidently betrayed, and by way of mitigating the horrors of the cell, remarked, pointing towards the slit in the wall:

"There's a very fine view of Paris from the window!"

"Yes!" echoed Ru, who was just then engaged in arranging the pallet and rug intended to serve as the prisoner's bed; "there is—a very fine view: only you can't see much of it."

The concluding sentence—uttered in an under-tone—was intended as a comment upon the preceding portion of it—a mode of speech peculiar to this functionary—who, bound by the laws of the prison to express no opinion contrary to that of his superiors in office, but possessing, notwithstanding, a very strong bias in favour of his own, had, by long practice, contracted a habit of first echoing their's, aloud, and then jerking in those belonging to himself, in a series of asides, and in a tone of voice corresponding with his station.

Perceiving that the prisoner made no reply, Corbé hazarded another conciliatory remark:

"You may have a fire if you like, Monsieur," said he, pointing to the wood in the recess.

"Yes," observed the satellite; "Monsieur can have a fire! (if he wants to be smothered!")

"What horrid hole is this to which you have brought me?" ejaculated St. Leu, looking imploringly at his jailers; "am I to remain here?"

"Until further orders, Monsieur," answered Corbé.

"But by whose command have I been arrested?" resumed the prisoner; "and what is my offence? I am unconscious of having incurred his Majesty's displeasure—have committed no crime—"

"That's not my business," replied the Lieutenant-Governor, interrupting him; "all I have now to do is to search you!"

"Stand off! wretch!" cried the young officer, receding from him; "I will spare you the trouble; resistance I know would be abortive, but you shall not lay a finger on me; I will voluntarily give up what I have about me if that is all you want."

"It is my duty to demand *every thing*," replied Corbé, with a derisive inclination of the body: "you will have your effects returned when you regain your liberty."

"Yes!" muttered Ru; "except what you keep."

"I have only a purse," resumed St. Leu, taking it out, and handing it to Ru, who stood between him and Corbé; "it contains—"

"A purse!" observed the *porte-clefs*, as the Lieutenant-Governor approached the light, and taking a pen, a small ink holder, and a piece of paper from his pocket, began to write; "an embroidered purse, containing—" here he emptied the money into his hand.

"An embroidered purse containing—" muttered Corbé, writing.

"Seven louis," continued Ru, returning that number into the purse, and dexterously conveying three of the glittering coins into the pocket of his jerkin.

"Two louis," said Corbé, appropriating the difference to himself with a great amount of coolness; "anything else?"

St. Leu, perceiving the inutility of remonstrating against this system of two-fold robbery, answered negatively: his sword had been taken from him on his entry.*

"Nothing! no papers!" observed the Lieutenant-Governor, interrogatingly.

"A few private letters, only," answered St. Leu, the blood rushing up into his hitherto pallid cheek, for the letters were from his betrothed—Julie.

"You must give them up," said Corbé, positively.

"I tell you that they are private—strictly private," remonstrated the young man; "they cannot possibly be of any service to any one."

"You don't know that," responded the other, in a still more peremptory tone of voice; "they may contain some important information—some secrets—"

"What!" cried St. Leu, indignantly; "are they then to be read? never!" and withdrawing the precious packet from its repository in his breast, he carried it to his lips, and instantly after, thrust it into the flame of the torch, holding it there until entirely consumed: "there!" continued he, dashing the red ashes into Corbé's face; "take them!"

* Only Marshals of France, Royal Dukes, (when admitted into the interior, which seldom happened,) Peers, and Captains of the Body-Guard had a *right* to enter the Bastile with their sword at their side.

The suddenness of his resolution, not less than the promptitude of its execution—which latter indeed, might be said to have almost preceded the former—completely stupified his jailers, who stood looking at each other, with a blank expression of countenance, totally incapable of preventing St. Leu from effecting his purpose, whilst he, having thus foiled them, turned on his heel, and retreating into the nearest recess of the dungeon, leaned his back against the wall, and with folded arms, awaited the issue—casting on the pair a mingled look of scorn and defiance.

Recovering from his astonishment, Corbé vented his anger and malice in a series of oaths and execrations interspersed with sundry side-looks at the prisoner, intimating very comprehensively, and with not less point, the gratification he experienced at having him within his grasp, conjointly with a latent intention of balancing accounts with him at the earliest opportunity: but Ru's equable temperament did not, on the contrary, appear in the slightest degree affected by the occurrence—beyond the temporary fit of surprise into which the prisoner's action threw him—yet, he looked two or three times very significantly at his superior, and then at the door, thereby conveying a silent allusion to the sentinel below; but on a negative sign from Corbé, he resumed his usual placid demeanour, becoming immediately lost in admiration of the bunch of keys that dangled in his hand.

"I would advise you to be less violent," at length muttered Corbé, scowling hideously at the prisoner;—"you will find it better in the end, for we have the law on our side. I shall report this conduct to Monsieur le Gouverneur."

"Yes!" echoed Ru; "we will report all: and a little more besides," added he in his aside voice, and casting an inquisitive glance at a riband that encircled St. Leu's neck.

The young officer heard the Lieutenant-Governor's menace with a scornful smile, but disdaining any reply thereto, snapped his fingers, by way of expressing his contempt for the same; at this moment Ru stepped up to Corbé, and whispered something in his ear, which caused the latter to direct his gaze more particularly to the young man's neck.

"You have something suspended from your neck," said he; "what is it?"

"A miniature," responded St. Leu.

"You must give it up," reiterated the former.

"I will," replied St. Leu, in a firm voice; "but not while I have life!"

"I tell you," shouted Corbé, "that resistance is madness; we must have it."

"Come and take it then," cried the young man, resolutely; "or rather, come and try;" and stooping, he caught up one of the heavy billets of wood that laid by his side, and held it high over his head; "I will cleave the skull of him who advances within reach of me!" continued he; "come on! I do not fear you!"

There was something so determined, so desperate in his air and attitude—intrenched as he kept himself in the recess—that Corbé, though he wore a sword, had not courage to attack him, nor did Ru manifest the slightest desire to set his superior the example, notwithstanding the earnestness with which he fingered his ponderous keys—an unequivocal hint that he felt an irresistible inclination to convert the same into offensive weapons, could he only do it without incurring personal risk : having stood thus for a few moments irresolute, the pair exchanged whispers and glances, and commenced a deliberate retreat, Corbé lighting the *porte-clefs* whilst the latter opened the massive doors : as they disappeared, St. Leu abandoned his intrenched position, and listening anxiously to their departing footsteps, groped his way to his pallet, upon which he threw himself, overcome with grief, becoming now entirely alive to all the horrors of his imprisonment, and to the miseries that awaited him.

His anguish, notwithstanding, was less acute on the score of the incarceration, itself, than on that of the circumstances attending it, for to find Julie a prisoner in such a place, alone sufficed to increase it tenfold ; thus, in the thought of her sufferings, he lost all consciousness of his own misfortune,—indeed, deeming himself even happy to be near, though debarred from seeing her !

How did he now condemn his suspicions of her fidelity ! how dwell upon the thousand proofs she had shown of her love for him, and of her anxiety for its consummation ! how swiftly the blood rushed through his bursting veins—increasing twenty-fold, the pulsations of his heart, as memory reproduced her every smile and look—setting her down in the darkness, there, before his very eyes—a beauteous unreality—a ravishing vision—to contemplate which, though intangible, was felicity : he durst not make the slightest movement lest he should destroy the illusion !

He now felt persuaded that she, like himself—had fallen a victim to some horrible plot—he knew it must be so, though why he knew it must be so, he could not tell : it was impossible she *could* prove false—her nature was all truth—all innocence—all virtue ! Who then could be the destroyer of their peace ? Who was he—the mysterious monk from whom St. Marcel, on that fatal night, procured the ring ? By what strange chance had her abode been discovered ? Wherefore had she been brought hither ? How long had she been a prisoner ? What stranger fatality had led to their meeting ; and what destiny was reserved for them ? All these and many other reflections such as these, crowded fast upon his mind—one jostling the other in its strife to rise uppermost—each, when uppermost, weighing the others down —all equally painful—equally fraught with mystery.

He thought too of the letter which he had written to her, and commissioned St. Marcel to deliver ! Every reproach that he had therein cast upon her, now fell back upon himself, with a hundred-fold more poignancy. If she had received that letter, what tortures had he thereby inflicted upon the heart he so prized ! the anguish which the consciousness of his injustice excited, was however allayed by a secret

hope that the missive had not yet reached her: his mind became calmer—he fell asleep, and dreamt of Julie!

What sounds are those that disturb the midnight solitude? Music! and a human voice singing in captivity! Can then happiness exist in a dungeon! Ah! that song is not of joy but sorrow! yet the plaintive melody awakens feelings that almost belong not to sadness, so wholly does it detach the mind from present suffering.

St. Leu awoke, not suddenly, but gradually—fancying himself an inhabitant of some other sphere, where the language was continuous harmony; he beheld near him a misty form of undefined proportions and strove in vain to clothe it with human attributes—it remained motionless: all at once the music ceased! He remembered where he was, and saw only the pale moon glimmering through the narrow window of his cell! there succeeded a long pause!

Again those sounds return—plaintive and low! How sad must be the soul of him who thus complains! how bitter the anguish that gives birth to such melancholy cadences! Could they who condemned him to solitude like this but hear him breathe his agony to the darkness and the solemn midnight hour, their heart would surely melt.

St. Leu sat upright upon his couch, and strove to discover whence the sounds proceeded: he found they came from the cell immediately beneath his own, and listened more attentively still, hoping to distinguish the burthen of the chaunt; in this he was unsuccessful, though he recognized the melody to be of Provençal origin, which led him to infer that the prisoner was from that province, a belief wherein he was strengthened by the circumstance of the unfortunate individual, whoever he was, accompanying himself upon a guitar, or some similar instrument, such as the natives use: at length the stranger ceased singing: all again relapsed into stillness, and St. Leu, distracted by a hundred conflicting emotions, fell into a disturbed sleep, from which he awoke in the morning, cold and unrested, and some length of time before Ru made his appearance.

This functionary brought him his breakfast, together with a pitcher of water, a tinder-box and matches, and pointing to the wood in the recess, then to the hearth, quitted the cell without uttering a word, the whole time that he remained in it not exceeding two minutes.

St. Leu was so unprepared to see him, and so surprised at the rapidity of his movements, that he had no opportunity of questioning him, though he intended to do so; determining notwithstanding, to carry out that intention when the man next should make his appearance, he proceeded to partake of the meal provided for him at the expence of the government, for he had tasted nothing now, for forty-eight hours.

Whether owing to the secret instructions conveyed in the letter of anticipation, or to the rank of the prisoner as holding his Majesty's commission in the *corps d'élite* of the Musketeers, neither the quality nor the quantity of the provision left anything to be desired; the wine too was of a good vintage, so that by the time he had completed his meal, he found his strength and spirits comparatively restored to

their usual tone, and in order to pass away the time began examining his dungeon more minutely.

It is almost needless to state that a hope of escape never entered his brain; he knew that in this respect his efforts must prove unsuccessful, for with the exception of the door, which was too securely fastened, and the window which was so narrow as nearly to exclude the light, only the chimney offered him any chance of gaining the exterior, and the latter aperture he knew to be guarded by the sentinels on the platform.

Through the opening intended to serve as a window—which, on account of the extreme thickness of the walls, grew gradually narrower as it approached the outside—he discerned a confused picture, comprising the towers of Notre Dame, a slender section of the *cité*, a winding of the river, and beyond these again, in the extreme distance, a few trees and the clear blue sky: but his attention was more particularly attracted to a name cut in rude characters, into the masonry of the window itself; having beneath it a date, and an inscription: these were as follows:

CLAVDE DE MONTMORENCY
CE 14 FEBVRIER 1686
IE SVIS ICI
DIEV SAIS POVRQVI
DIEV SEVL IL SCAIT
QVAND IEN SCORTIRAIS*

St. Leu heaved a deep sigh, conjecturing what might be the sequel to this unfortunate gentleman's history, and continued his examination of the walls.

Immediately opposite the inscription which he had just deciphered, appeared the name—

JOHN HASTINGS.

And beneath it, the words

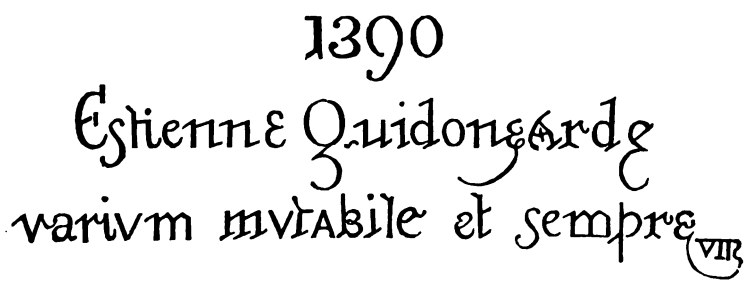
GOD SAVE KING JAMES AND THE BRITISH NAVY.†

Above and around these was inscribed a multitude of dates, initials, and names, some of which latter he could not decipher; the earliest date was jagged deep into the stonework, and appeared over the name itself, immediately beneath which was a quotation from Virgil, doubtless intended to convey the secret of the prisoner's incarcera-

* I am here, God knows why; God alone knows, When I shall leave it.
(*For the sequel, see note to Chapter* XII. *page* 114, *part* 4.)

† Folio 119 of the Official Register for the year 1696 contains the following entry.
"John Hastings; Treason: English Mariner. Captain of a vessel of war; in the service of the King of Denmark: attempted to set fire to His Most Christian Majesty's fleet when at anchor off Brest."
There is no corresponding entry of the date of his liberation; thus the probability is that he shared the fate of the Sieur de Montmorency.

tion; but whether the poet's satire applied in this instance, to a female, or to the multitude—in other words—whether the unfortunate individual fell a victim to some capricious beauty, or to the fickleness of the mobocracy of the times, remained a mystery: the sentence was as follows, and cut in rude Gothic characters:



Another, and the most recent memento ran thus:

PATRICK MARCVS LYNCH OF CORK,—
ALL WHICH I CVT IN WITH A FORK—
25 JVNE 1699.*

St. Leu continued his examination—the inscriptions and dates upon the walls, furnishing him ample food for reflection; his own position too, excited his warmest sympathy for his predecessors, whose names served as a key to a long and melancholy record of captivity and suffering; he was now no longer alone—the very stones spoke to him, though not of happiness—he could converse with the past, and people with the forms of those that belonged to it, his dark and dreary abode. Alas! how many of these had been restored to liberty—how many died there—forgotten! Which of these fates was to be his? and what the destiny of her, who lingered in like solitude to his own? But he shook off the horrid doubts that over-pressed him—for his saddened heart yet beat high with hope: he felt that even though thus hidden from the world, nor massive walls, nor ponderous doors, nor heavy bolts, nor heavier bars, nor the vigilance of their jailers, could conceal them from the eye of Him above: this gleam of comfort burst upon him unobscured, and he once more forgot his own calamities in those of his predecessors!†

Amongst the many inscriptions that were engraven on the stone-work, the following struck him most, as affording a deeper insight

* Constantin de Renneville mentions in his memoirs, the name of this gentleman, who was a captain in the army, and incarcerated on suspicion of being a spy of King William's.

† In the reign of Louis Quinze, an individual named Brun de Condamine, was confined in this same cell. Having invented a kind of *exploding bullet*, he communicated his discovery to Monsieur de Sartines, then Lieutenant of Police, in hopes of inducing the Government to purchase the secret, but was shortly afterwards arrested and conveyed to the Bastile. Hence, he attempted to escape, and had succeeded in lowering himself from the parapet of the towers, when the cord broke by which he hung suspended, and he fell into the ditch; the sentinel fired at and

into the feelings of those who had thus sought to perpetuate them; the first reflection was embodied in a line from Juvenal—and ran thus; it immediately followed the last laconic couplet:

"*Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura colombas.*"

Under this was carved another line, in Italian:

"*Empoisona ovè strangola.*"

Beneath the latter again, a third phrase, in Latin, ran thus:

"*Patientia levius fit malum.*"

And underneath this last, a parody upon the same, in French:

"*La Patience! c'est la vertu des asnes!*"

St. Leu sighed deeply, took the sharp-pointed knife that had served him at his recent meal, and added his name to the long catalogue already there, annexing the following aphorism from Seneca:

"*Solent suprema facere securos mala.*"

Having completed his task, he returned to his pallet, and began to ponder upon the events of the last two days, and upon their probable issue.

Although his reflections were far from encouraging, he did not despond, neither despair of regaining his liberty; his principal, indeed his sole anxiety, was for the safety of Julie, an interview with whom he determined to gain, by bribing one of his jailers to connive thereat: he therefore awaited their appearance with the greatest impatience.

But they came not—and the hours lagged heavily on, and found the prisoner still in expectation—listening to catch the sound of a bell, to warn him of the time of day—in vain seeking to mark the descent of the sun towards the west: he could only conjecture—from the time that had elapsed since Ru's last visit, that it must be long after noon—but beyond this, his judgment was at fault: shivering with cold, he began to collect fuel to kindle a fire—for the proximity of the cell to the roof of the tower did not tend to raise the temperature of the atmosphere within, its state without being sufficiently indicated by the moisture that had oozed in large drops from the walls, and now clung there in half frozen icicles.

He had however, scarcely applied a light to the damp logs, than he perceived by the dense volume of smoke that rushed out into the chamber, that there was an obstruction in the chimney; he was therefore compelled to extinguish the fire, to avoid suffocation, and with this additional inconvenience, patiently awaited the arrival of Ru.

At length, as day-light began to decline, Ru made his appearance, much to the relief of St. Leu; he brought the prisoner's second repast, which like the first, was abundant and of good quality: having

wounded him, and brought him before the Governor, De Launey, who ordered him to be cast into the dungeon for eight days, and to be fed only on half allowance of bread and water. He remained in the Bastile, from 1779 to 1783, during a part of which time he also inhabited No. 2 in the Bertaudière. The Register does not state whether he was liberated.

The fact is alluded to, as curious and interesting, as it bears some affinity to the more recent invention of *Captain Warner*, which is at present creating so great a sensation.

laid out the same, he set up a candle in an old iron candle-stick, placed it upon the table, and pointing to the viands, brought his code of signals into play to intimate that every article was of the first quality.

"Friend!" exclaimed St. Leu, perceiving that Ru was on the point of vanishing, "a word with you."

The jailer shook his head, but stopped short in the door-way, staring intently at his interrogator.

"I must have a fire," resumed St. Leu, "but I cannot kindle one; the chimney is choked up!"

"Can't help it," replied Ru; "Corbé won't tell the Governor."

"Who is Corbé, friend?" asked the prisoner.

By means of his system of telegraphy, Ru entered into an elaborate description of the Lieutenant-Governor's person, which would by no means have flattered that individual's vanity had he witnessed the various distortions whereby the facetious *porte-clefs* illustrated his idea of the physiognomy of his superior: it was however, sufficiently graphic for St. Leu to identify him, and comic enough to excite him to smile, on perceiving which, Ru appeared seized with an irresistible inclination to imitate his example on the most extensive scale possible, for the corners of his mouth, receding from each other until they became on terms of the closest intimacy with his ears, that organ remained distended until its owner's cachinnatory emotion subsided, when it relaxed into its natural position with an elastic suddenness that was perfectly wonderful.

"I comprehend," replied St. Leu; "but will *you* not undertake to deliver my message to the Governor?"

"St. Marc would laugh at you," answered Ru: "a smoky chimney saves his wood! You must go to bed; then you won't want a fire!"

So saying, he turned on his heel, and was on the point of quitting the cell—having his hand already on the heavy door—when St. Leu again addressed him, deeming prudent, for the sake of the information he hoped to obtain, to overlook his insolence.

"Stay," said he; "tell me; do you know this face?" and drawing the miniature of Julie from his bosom, he exhibited it to Ru.

The latter cast upon it a rapid glance, and nodded his head affirmatively.

"How long has she been here, friend!" cried the former, hurriedly; "answer me that, and I will one day handsomely reward you."

Ru shrugged his shoulders, hitched up his eye-brows, shut his eyes very hard, pursed up his mouth very close, extended his hand very significantly, and lastly shook his head very negatively, implying, that though he knew all about it, he could not tell the inquirer, because he durst not, and that even if he durst, he would not, unless paid for it: all which St. Leu perfectly understood.

"I have nothing to give you," said he, sorrowfully; "but you will not refuse to tell me where she is confined."

The *porte-clefs* stared at the speaker with a comic look of concern, and thumping his left side very hard, muttered the word, "Bridget," heaving a sigh, that seemed to come from the bellows of a smith's forge when in full operation; then pointing downwards, three or four times with his bunch of keys—made a precipitate retreat, as

though equally afraid of the indiscretion he had committted as desirous of avoiding the opportunity of committing another.

As soon as he was gone, St. Leu imprinted a kiss upon the beautiful image that he held, and replaced it in his bosom; he sighed as he thought of her fate—yet it was a consolation—a slight one perhaps, but a consolation still—to know that he was so near her; he found the dungeon irksome, only because its walls were interposed between him and the object of his love.

Ru's hint at the Governor's avarice served to fortify St. Leu in a resolution that he had shortly since conceived, namely, to explore the aperture that served as a chimney, with a view to remove the obstruction if possible, persuaded that even should he be discovered in the attempt, the result could not render his position worse.

Leaving his meal untouched until his task should be completed, he cast off a portion of his clothes, and strengthening himself with a glass of the wine that Ru had brought, lighted the candle—for it was now dark—and proceeded to examine the aperture; it was scarcely wide enough to admit his body, but by great exertion—cutting and bruising his hands and knees in the attempt—he succeeded in forcing himself a part of the way up, until he found his further progress arrested by a thick bar of iron; in vain he essayed to remove it, for still suffering from the effects of his wound, his strength was unequal to the task, and he was nearly abandoning it, when he imagined that the bar could possibly be bent sufficiently out of its place to afford a passage for his shoulders: accordingly he redoubled his exertions, and after reiterated efforts, perceived that it gave way; at length he forced it so much aside that he was enabled to pass through the barrier; but a few feet higher up, another difficulty presented itself in the shape of a second obstruction of a similar kind; again his courage failed him, for his strength was almost expended, when to his great joy he discovered that the second bar was loose—probably in consequence of its not having been securely fixed in the origin, or of the cement having since given way—still, nearly an hour elapsed before he could tear it from the masonry, and even when obtained, he feared to employ it, lest he should alarm the sentinels above, whose footsteps, as they paced the platform, he now distinctly heard. His irresolution, however, was but of short duration; and having rested awhile, he recommenced his ascent, nor had proceeded very much higher, when, in an elbow of the aperture, and forming a compact mass, he found accumulated a quantity of hay, straw, old cement, pieces of brick and stone, sticks, and various kinds of rubbish, that had evidently been thrown into it from without: plying his iron-bar, he soon succeeded—much to the danger of his eyes and his person, from the falling dust and stones—in entirely dislodging the obstruction, which task completed, he regained his cell.

He conjectured—judging by the more than half-burnt candle—that his labour had occupied him fully three hours, and guided by the appearance of the day when Ru arrived, that it must now be nearly eight o'clock. His first care was to conceal the iron-bar that he had procured, struck with a sudden thought that it might be of service some other time; he then proceeded to wash off the dirt and blood that

begrimed his person, for his legs and hands were severely lacerated, and bled freely; this done he dressed himself, and clearing the hearth of the mass of rubbish that had fallen, proceeded to kindle a fire—more for comfort's sake than for the warmth—for his late exertion had thrown him into a profuse perspiration. To his great relief, he perceived that the smoke followed its natural bent; the wood, though damp, began to crackle and blaze, imparting a portion of the cheerfulness so peculiar to itself, to every object in the cell: St. Leu drew up the ricketty table as close to it as he conveniently could, placed the not less ricketty chair by its side, and seating himself therein, soon consumed the viands whose first-rate quality Ru had so much vaunted.

The first shock that the human mind receives—whether it be of joy or of grief—is ever the severest—for succeeding impressions, even though they be of the same nature, never again affect it so acutely. It seems indeed one of the wisest dispensations of Providence to have endowed so exquisitely sensitive a part of man with this elastic faculty, since there are some emotions so violent, that did they continue with the same force as they shocked, the mind must inevitably fall a victim thereto; as in fact some do, sinking either suddenly, or gradually, into madness or idiotcy, from their lacking strength to bear up against the first impression.

Man—from ingenerate sternness—is impatient under adversity: woman—from the suppleness of her nature—comparatively resigned; but this inferiority in the former is amply compensated for, and their equality felicitously established, in their progress through life; for in the bustle and the turmoil of the world—amidst contending interests and influences—in the strife of the strong against the weak—in this sphere—where she is unfitted to move by the possession of those very qualities that so eminently distinguish her from him—woman instinctively leans towards man for protection and support: but when calamity overtakes him—or satiety has deprived illicit pleasure of its charm—or sorrow cankers his heart—man turns to woman for consolation, and in her fond bosom finds a solace for every affliction.

Against blighted affections, however, woman bears up with less energy than man, for at the hazard-table of love, she stakes at a venture, her whole existence—her entire being—her all—! alas! often, too often, to retire ruined! And now no longer can she contend against the frightful intensity of her sufferings—the fountains of her heart are broken up—she must die of the shock—or become an outcast—or sit down alone and weep, until, fretted to its last fibre, the thread of life snaps!

Not so with man: a disappointment of the heart may overwhelm him at first, but his pursuits tend to divert his thoughts into a variety of channels, and he soons yields to new temptations: thenceforward he looks upon love with disenchantment—regards it as a plaything—a chimera—an unreality—a will-o'-the-wisp—ever flitting before him, but which, though ever chasing it, he never more can come up with!

Approximating to these latter, on the score of the reality of love, were St. Leu's thoughts on learning from St. Marcel the story of the

ring. The first shock prostrated him, but he gradually recovered from it, and in the excitement arising from disappointment, penned a letter to Julie full of bitter reproaches. His unexpected meeting with her in the Bastile, dispelled his doubts; but the new and heavier calamity that had overtaken him, prostrated his spirits still more than the first; the lethargy into which he sunk was, however, only transitory; he awoke from it suddenly, and as out of a refreshing sleep, with his mind restored to its usual energy, towards which happy consummation the excitement of the late scene had mainly contributed. Buoyed up by the hope of procuring an interview with his betrothed, he now felt comparatively resigned to his position, nor perceived the difficulty of accomplishing the project he entertained, until he began to reflect upon the means of attaining it: plan after plan presented itself, only to be canvassed and rejected—then, his ideas gradually became confused, his thoughts imperceptibly wandered from his design, and reverted solely to her who was the object of it: once centred here, every thing else was forgotten: his jealousy, his doubts, his fears, and the dark dungeon whose stony arms encircled him, disappeared, the image of Julie alone retaining possession of his imagination: he fixed his eyes upon the bright fire, which suddenly seemed to blaze and crackle more cheerfully than ever; folding his arms and resting his feet upon the low hearth, a delicious languor overcame his senses, to which, with half-closed eyes, he gave himself up, thinking still more of Julie; by degrees, his ideas even of *her* became confused, and the glowing embers began to assume all sorts of quaint forms, every moment changing to others, quainter still than their predecessors, until, at last, they fashioned themselves into a face, embodying the features of Ru distended to an extravagant breadth, in the act of repeating his pantomimic description of Corbé: but even this phantasmagoric illusion gradually grew fainter, until having suddenly disappeared and re-appeared several times at divers intervals, it all at once merged into darkness.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE DUKE OF CHARTRES AND HIS COMPANIONS: THE CAROUSAL AT THE PALAIS ROYAL.

Let us now quit the sombre interior of the *calotte de la Bertaudière*, and supposing a week or more to have elapsed since D'Argenson's last visit to Versailles, transport ourselves to the voluptuous pavilion adjoining the apartments of Monseigneur Philippe d'Orleans, Duke of Chartres, situated in the western wing of the palace erected by that sumptuous prodigal, Cardinal Richelieu.*

* This celebrated personage commenced the above-named edifice, in the year 1629. It was erected on the site of the ancient Hôtels de Mercœur and Rambouillet which belonged, in the 15th century, to the Connétable d'Armagnac, and were situated in the Rue St. Honoré. In the reign of Charles the Fifth, the site of the present gardens was traversed by the wall and ditch that surrounded Paris, which

The clock of the Louvre had not long struck eleven—the night-watch had been set, and such few of the citizens whom business or pleasure had detained beyond their usual hour, were hurrying homewards with all the diligence that the fear of being stopped and interrogated by the spies of the Lieutenant of Police, or the greater dread of a curtain-lecture from their better fraction, could inspire them with.

At irregular intervals, however, from that hour up to midnight, any inquisitive individual that for the time being, felt inclined to lose sight of the penalty attached—most particularly in those days—to the heinous crime of peeping, might easily, and without very narrowly watching at a certain small dark gate established in the dead wall, whose site is now occupied by the Rue de Valois, which said gate opened into the gardens of the Palais Royal—have witnessed a circumstance calculated to afford him matter for further speculation. This was the arrival, at different periods, first of some three or four cavaliers, and secondly of exactly half a dozen sedans, each of which latter deposited a female figure so jealously muffled up in her mantle, as not to leave visible, even the very smallest bit of her features. The cavaliers came on foot, and as soon as the small door was opened, walked boldly in: not so the fair visiters, who on being liberated from their chair, darted furtively through, and without looking right or left, made the best of their way across the garden to the pavilion.

The door had not long closed upon the last comer, before a man of very tall stature—who had been on the watch—suddenly emerged from a salient angle of the wall; having looked about him, and listened for a few moments, to make sure that no one was near, he disengaged himself from a large cloak in which his person was enfolded, and producing a rope, to one end whereof was attached a grapnel, threw it over the wall, and gaining the summit by its assistance, immediately disappeared over the other side.

But if all was quiet outside, all within was noise and bustle, and hurry, and confusion—with great shuffling of feet in the passages—and greater clamour of tongues in the kitchens—but still greater dancing about of lights everywhere: these, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, might be seen, some darting singly, through the apartments above, some three or four in a cluster, flying through

crossed it in the direction of the present basin, and of the Café de Foy. In 1624, Richelieu purchased the above Hôtels of the Marquis D'Estrées, together with four others, and in the year 1629, began building his Palace, after the design of Lemercier. Over the principal gate he placed the arms of Richelieu, surmounted by a cardinal's hat, and underneath, in gold letters, inscribed the words: "*Palais du Cardinal*," which designation it retained until 1642, when Louis Treize and his Queen took possession of the palace, it having been bequeathed to them by its projecter—and gave it the name it still bears, namely: "*Palais Royal*." In 1629, Louis Quatorze assigned it to his brother, Monsieur, Duke of Orleans, and to his heirs male for ever, when its name was changed to "*Palais D'Orleans*," though it still continued to be also distinguished by its former appellation.

The gardens attached to it were originally of much greater extent, and surrounded by high walls, which were subsequently thrown down, and upon their site, including a good portion of that of the garden, were erected the shops, galleries, and houses that now complete the quadrangle. The precincts of the Palace still afford a sanctuary to debtors, who once within them, are no longer liable to the law of arrest.

those below; many outside—more in—but all of them at last accumulating in the pavilion already mentioned, when the curtains were suddenly drawn before the windows, and the perambulations of the torches became confined to the passages.

For some time however after it had subsided every where else, the bustle still continued in the kitchens, for Signor Pannada, the Duke's head cook—who knew a hundred a fifty-three ways of dressing eggs and was rapidly inventing the hundred and fifty-fourth—was not yet accustomed to the *petits soupers* which a few years afterwards became so celebrated; they were as yet in their infancy, and like all infants, troublesome to manage—especially coming at a short notice, or altogether unexpectedly—thus there was on his part, much fuming and fussing, and swearing—cooks do swear when they are in a hurry—and scolding, and admonishing; and on the part of the scullions, a great deal of grumbling, and snubbing—and on the part of the lackeys, a vast amount of extra activity in order to the quick translation of the delicate viands from the laboratory to the pavillion—nor was the activity less great on the part of the guests whom Monsieur de Chartres had that night invited to feast upon the said delicacies, and who had now congregated, to the number of twelve, in the delicious sanctuary styled by him, *the pavilion of pleasure.*

It was octagonal, and comprised a suite of four apartments, namely, a library, a billiard-room, a sitting-room, convertible into a sleeping-apartment, and a banquetting-room, besides a couple of ante-chambers for the lackeys and waiting men: every thing that it contained was sumptuous in the extreme, and in perfect keeping with its title.

The banquetting-room, in which the company were assembled, particularly deserves notice. It was furnished and decorated in the most elegant manner: the ceiling, exquisitely painted, represented the amours of the gods and other mythological subjects of the most voluptuous kind, the walls being covered with tapestry and paintings illustrative of the same; the hangings—of a deep plum colour—were of velvet, richly embroidered, and fringed with gold; a chandelier of crystal depended from a rosace in the centre of the ceiling, the light from which was reflected from looking-glasses and mirrors placed all around the apartment, imparting to it the splendour of enchantment: in four of the angles stood marble pedestals surmounted by statues of Diana, Venus, Psyche, and Leda; in the four others, upon similar pedestals, were as many vases, each, by an ingenious mechanical contrivance, made to throw up a small jet of aromatized water, the tricklings of which, as it fell, drop by drop, sounded like softest music; the banquetting-table itself, groaned not less beneath the weight of gold and silver plate with which it was loaded, than of the dainties upon it, including every delicacy that the season afforded, or could be made to produce, or that the genius of Pannada could invent to pique the palate of the noble epicures.

First in the throng was Monseigneur de Chartres himself, seated at the head of his guests between two *comédiennes* of the opera, celebrated for their beauty and wit; the one to his right, called *Ida, La Belle Bouclée*, on account of the profusion of her hair; the other, to his left, *La Brunette*; next to the latter, sat Monseigneur D'Argenson,

having to his left a beautiful and wealthy courtezan named Druçille, next to whom sat the young and handsome Chevalier de Brancas, flanked by one Madame la Motte; to the left again of the latter, opposite the Duke, sat the Marquis D'Effiat, and to the right of Ida, the Abbé Dubois, Monseigneur's preceptor, and the superintendent of his pleasures, or, as he was afterwards styled, *Secrétaire des Commandemens de Monseigneur;* he had retained his clerical habit, in order, as he observed, *'to sanctify the feast,'* and was flanked by one of the late maids of honour of Madame la Duchesse de Chartres, to whom, on account of her liveliness, the *sobriquet* of *La Rieuse* had been given; next to her, sat the Marquis de St. Fare, the intermediate place between whom and D'Effiat was filled up by a sixth female, designated as *La Belle Roxane.*

From the commencement of the feast, the conversation was confined to individual *tête-à-tête,* but as soon as the dessert was served, the Duke ordered the lackeys to retire and close the doors, when filling up a bumper, he exclaimed:

"Now, friends! away with etiquette; let us think only of pleasure! St. Fare, push round the nectar."

The Duke's signal for the commencement of the orgie was hailed by shouts of applause, and the wine began to circulate freely.

"I must confess," observed D'Effiat, with an air of langour, "that Monsieur le Duc does well to banish etiquette from these little parties; I can't suffer it. I would any day rather put on a strait waistcoat than a court air.'

"No wonder!" cried Dubois, stammering according to custom, and tittering till he almost stifled the joke he was on the point of uttering; "the waistcoat suits you so much better."

"Calf's tongue with sharp sauce," retorted D'Effiat, referring to the Abbé's speech, and to a certain dish of which he was excessively fond.

The repartee on the point of Dubois' tongue, was drowned in a burst of laughter, in which the ladies took no inconsiderable part.

"Ah! ah! Dubois!" cried the Duke; "thou art fairly worsted; but never mind: spare not the wine—'twill sharpen thy wit against the next assault, for make thee drunk it never will."

"No! there are three things," said de Brancas, "that the Abbé is famous for: never getting drunk—never losing at play—and—" he paused.

"And what?" shouted three or four voices.

"Never telling the truth," continued de Brancas.

Renewed shouts rent the apartment, the Abbé joining in the laugh against himself, though with a bad grace, and burying his mortification in a bumper.

"The first word of truth that the Abbé utters," said La Rieuse, shewing her extensive set of white teeth; "I will have set in a gold frame as a curiosity."

"Thanks, Madame," replied Dubois, with a malicious grin; "you had better keep the frame against you find your reputation."

"Oh! the bitter wretch!" cried La Belle Roxane, laughing; "he thinks we of the weaker sex can't do without one."

"There are at least half a dozen living proofs here to the con-

trary," retorted the Abbé; and at the same instant he received on his right cheek a slap from the fair hand of La Rieuse, and on his left, a similar application from the fan of Ida, both of which he immediately responded to, by gallantly kissing the hand of each, the whole scene appearing to delight the Duke and his companions, who were convulsed with laughter, and clapped their hands in the exuberance of their merriment.

D'Argenson appeared to take but little interest, in the general hilarity, but paid extreme attention to the viands set before him, most especially to the wine; he kept himself, for some time, thrust backwards in his chair, watching, one and the other, as if for the purpose of catching any stray expression that either should let fall, which he might—in the way of his peculiar line of business—turn to profit: but by degrees, the good cheer operated more favourably upon him—his countenance assumed a less bilious expression—his sunken eyes brightened—and he began to whisper in the ear of Druçille, who, however, received his compliments—if such they were—with a great degree of reserve, evidently more desirous of cultivating the particular acquaintance of the Chevalier de Brancas.

Numerous were the pleasantries now bandied from side to side; the wine circulated with amazing rapidity, repartee succeeding repartee with the quickness of thought, intermingled with the recital of divers scandalous adventures that malice or the love of mischief had propagated; and long and loud were the peals of laughter that followed a smart joke, or the detail of a *faux-pas*, the Duke setting the example, by retailing such anecdotes as were most calculated, from their extreme piquancy, to delight his guests.

Taking advantage of a pause—for the uproar was for a time so great that no single individual could make himself heard—the Duke filled his glass, and elevating it above his head, first pledged La Bouclée, then re-filling, and motioning his companions to do the same, exclaimed:

"Come, friends! here's to our presiding divinities, Venus and Bacchus: since we worship at their shrine, we ought not to omit propitiating their favour;" saying which, he drained his glass, an example which was immediately imitated by the rest.

"I shall propose a sentiment," exclaimed D'Effiat, replenishing, and speaking across the table to D'Orleans.

"Sentiment from *you*, Marquis," cried La Brunette, laughing, "will be something quite novel—"

"If *you* inspired me with it, *belle Brunette*," retorted the satirical marquis, "it would indeed."

"The sentiment—the sentiment," cried three or four voices, interrupting the colloquy.

"Here it is, then," exclaimed he; "when we want to kill Time! may we never lack Wine."

"Bravo! Bravo!" shouted D'Orleans, whirling his glass above his head, "D'Effiat's sentiment repeated."

"'Tis the only good one he can lay claim to," ejaculated Dubois; delighted to have an opportunity of rubbing off a portion of his score against the marquis, at whose expense the laugh rose with renewed boisterousness.

"I don't believe the Abbé ever possessed a good one himself, that he didn't blush to own it;" observed D'Argenson, with a sneering smirk, as soon as the noise had somewhat subsided.

"Perhaps not," retorted Dubois, nowise disconcerted; "but every body knows that Monseigneur D'Argenson never could lay claim to a single good one in his life! Friends! I propose to write his epitaph," continued he: "Here lieth one who never set an example worth following."

"Can'st thou not write mine, Dubois?" observed D'Orleans, applying himself assiduously to the bottle.

"'Tis not worth while," retorted the shameless Abbé; "one for Monsieur le Duc's mother will serve both: here lieth Idleness."

This allegorical allusion to idleness as the parent of all the vices, was quickly seized by the company, who watched the Duke's countenance, to read how to mould their own, and how to receive the Abbé's witticism: but D'Orleans after a moment's pause—for he was the last to comprehend the epigram—burst into a fit of laughter, that was re-echoed by his guests, and throwing the remnants of a peach into his preceptor's face, ejaculated the word "*coquin!*"*

Dubois perceived that the Duke was piqued, notwithstanding, and catching up the morsel of fruit that the latter had thrown at him, flung it across the table into D'Argenson's face, saying, with admirable presence of mind:

"*Allons*, Monseigneur! let us divide the Prince's favours."

The happiness of this jest immediately created a favourable diversion, entirely restoring the Duke to good humour, and exciting long and loud peals of laughter, every one seeming to enjoy it most, except the morose Lieutenant of Police, who did not appear to enjoy it at all; the general conversation was renewed with increased vivacity, occasionally subsiding into confidential whisperings confined to individual couples, then again bursting into a confusion of tongues that might have vied with that of Babel, a running fire being all the while kept up of epigrams, and *double-entendres*, every moment increasing in smartness, often degenerating to the extreme of licentiousness, to which the clashing of glasses, the clapping of hands and other clamorous demonstrations of merriment, formed an apt accompaniment.

"Give me," cried D'Effiat—who had just toasted La Rieuse, and began to betray decided symptons of inability to keep his eyes open, and his head from describing a multitude of circles—"give me a nymph like La Rieuse to toast, and a bumper of Burgundy—glorious Burgundy—to pledge her in, and I wouldn't thank our Grand Monarque for his sceptre! rosy wine for ever say I!"

"And so too say I!" shouted St. Fare; "and Dubois will join us in the sentiment: our friends can't do better than follow the example set us by the church."

A succession of "Ah! ah! ahs!" resounded from every side.

"I've heard Dubois say," exclaimed D'Orleans, dashing his glass

* Madame D'Orleans the Duke's mother, was of a most indolent disposition, and to Dubois was attributed the promulgation of the above-mentioned satire after her decease: it ran thus: "*Ci gît l'Oisivetè!*" the Duke however only laughed at it, and called Dubois a *coquin.—(Vide St. Simon.)*

down upon the table, "that wine-bibbing is a cardinal virtue, and a priestly custom, and one that ought to be more practised, because it makes a man's heart expand with charity towards all men—"

"And inspires him with such notions of humility," stammered the Abbé, interrupting the Duke, "that if he's only drunk enough, he runs to earth, full-length—like a worm."

This sally excited another burst of laughter, in which the decanters, bottles and glasses seemed to join, communicating their hilarity to the table itself, which groaned and cracked as if on the very verge of falling to pieces.

"My turn for a toast," shouted de Brancas—who, with a view to ingratiate himself into the good graces of La Motte, had, at intervals, during the evening, divided his attentions between herself and her pet spaniel—"we have as yet toasted her only by bits; I propose her piece: here's woman—the life of man!"

"Woman! the life of man and the Poetry of Nature," added Dubois.

"The poetry of nature in couplets," stammered D'Effiat, emptying the contents of his glass into his waistcoat, instead of his mouth.

"Poetry in petticoats," cried St. Fare, at the very top of his voice.

"Poetry *in* petticoats and *out* of them," roared D'Orleans, falling back in his chair in an agony of mirth, whilst the uproar, that had for a while subsided, was renewed with greater extravagance of speech and gesture than before.

The convivial party, consisting originally of twelve, had in the interim been augmented by the arrival of a thirteenth, who remained invisible, though a witness of all the proceedings: this was no other than the tall man, who had, at an earlier hour of the evening, scaled the outer wall, in the manner already mentioned.

He had been the whole of that day upon the track of the Lieutenant of Police, dogging his steps with the most determined perseverance, until he saw him enter the Palais Royal by the small dark door described above. Half suspecting what was going forward—for he was a shrewd man—but not enjoying the privilege of the *entrée*, he took the trifling liberty of admitting himself upon the strength of the leave proverbially peculiar to his nation, conjointly with that of the grapnel and rope—a mechanical contrivance particularly well adapted to facilitate similar exploits, and which, being in the habit of often requiring, he never travelled without. Having succeeded thus far, he was not a little disconcerted—though no wise discouraged—to find himself hermetically excluded from the pavilion to which he had traced the fugitive; but this untoward circumstance served only to sharpen his invention. The window, which was scarcely five feet from the ground, seemed to afford him the readiest means of access, but it was secured within by an *espagnolette*, a difficulty not easily overcome: besides this, servants were running to and fro, who were likely to detect him in the attempt—another contrariety; however, the night, which was very dark, favoured him materially, and watching his opportunity, he commenced operations by inserting the blade of his pocket-knife between the crevices of the window, the noise he made being drowned by the greater clamour within. After much difficulty, he succeeded in working the bolt of the *espagnolette*

out of its place, and easily accomplished the remainder of his project: he cautiously opened the window, and crept in, closing it after him and crouching down behind the long hangings, which served entirely to conceal him from observation: here he remained unsuspected, listening to everything, occasionally applying one eye to a friendly opening in the drapery, and thence surveying the company with the greatest complacency.

The Lieutenant of Police, who had confined his gallantry and his conversation almost wholly to the beautiful Druçille, perceiving that the guests had arrived at that crisis of convivial happiness which will not admit of augmentation without diminution, and formed themselves into coteries of twos and threes, took advantage of the termination of a *téte-à-téte* in which the Duke had been some time engaged with La Belle Bouclée, to attract his attention; holding his glass in one hand he leaned across the table, and said to him in an under tone:

"Highness! here's to the fair owner of the diamond ring."

"Say'st thou so?" responded he, "so be it: by my faith I had almost forgotten her. How is she, Monseigneur—the dear little angel: step this way friend D'Argenson, a word with thee."

D'Orleans rose from the table—his guests being now too deeply absorbed in themselves to notice his absence—and catching the Lieutenant of Police by the arm, led him to the recess where the stranger lay concealed, stationing himself close to the drapery, so that the former could distinguish the form of both, and stood trembling to see D' Orleans grasp the curtain for the purpose of steadying himself, fearing every moment that he would drag it aside and leave him exposed.

"Tell me," said the Duke, commencing a colloquy that he was far from suspecting was not confined to the exclusive hearing of himself and D'Argenson, "when am I to see the lovely Julie again?"

The Lieutenant of Police paused awhile ere he answered, which he at length did, in a very low tone, as if suspicious of being overheard by the company, or of saying too much.

"When I saw your Highness, at Versailles," said he," I explained—"

"Pardon me, friend D'Argenson," observed the Prince, interrupting him—at the same time laying a hand upon his shoulder in order to maintain his perpendicular; "thou did'st not explain anything at all—only promised to liberate the little chicken—upon the faith of which, I took measures for carrying her off."

"There were reasons for the delay, Highness."

"The devil take thy reasons, friend D'Argenson; thou art as crafty as a fox, and as full of reasons as a law-suit! Tell me at once—when wilt thou set her free?"

"I cannot do it at all, Highness; at least for the present."

"Very well," retorted D'Orleans; "then thou must order St. Marc to admit me to see her in the Bastile."

"That is impossible, Highness," replied D'Argenson, with a smile of satisfaction; "I have his Majesty's warrant for her safe keeping during his gracious pleasure."

This unexpected announcement astounded the Prince, and almost threw him off his balance.

"Surely," ejaculated he, in a less muddy voice, "surely our royal uncle has not seen her!"

"No! Highness, no!" responded the other; "but I cannot now explain the motives that necessitate her detention."

"But why," continued D'Orleans, "can I not visit her in the Bastile —to-morrow—any day—as I did on a former occasion?"

"Highness, you must renounce her," exclaimed D'Argenson, in a sharp, brief tone.

"Must!" retorted the other; "that is a strong term, Monseigneur! What! renounce her, after all the trouble that the Père Dubois took to track her? after my mis-adventure too with St. Leu, who was well nigh running me through—though to be sure he could not know me: renounce her, Sieur D'Argenson; ah! ah! ah! ah! ah!"

"'Tis only a caprice, after all, Highness;" remonstrated the cunning Lieutenant, as soon as the Duke's contemptuous laugh had subsided.

"We will return to our friends, Monseigneur;" observed the Duke; "I prefer their company to a *tête-à-tête* with thee—look! there's Dubois, watching us like a lynx!"

He was on the point of quitting the recess, when D'Argenson detained him by the arm, saying:

"Is your heart so far engaged, Highness, that you could not relinquish her for another? I have often heard you boast that no woman possessed fascination enough to fix your affections."

"Affections, indeed," replied the Prince, smiling at the conceit; "by my faith, I don't remember ever having had any! But I more than half suspect thee, friend D'Argenson, of being my rival! I did from the first! I may be mistaken—but if I am, thy speciousness is a paradox."

"You *are* mistaken, Highness," answered D'Argenson, assuming a look of the most immaculate virtue; "between us there can be no rivalry."

"I confess that," retorted the Prince.

"I wished to inform your Highness," resumed the Lieutenant of Police, gradually bringing D'Orleans into a line, "that you are mistaken in the person of the girl—"

"I cannot be mistaken in her beauty, friend D'Argenson; what matters the rest? said the Duke, interrupting him.

"The two sisters are equally worthy of your Highness's notice," continued the other, relying on his own adroitness to bring the fickle Prince over to his own views.

"Ah! that alters the case, indeed, friend D'Argenson; two birds to trap, eh! Thou art not duping me, eh?"

"We have both been deceived, Highness; a mistake on the part of my emissary Jacques, caused the imprisonment of Julie de St. Auney instead of her sister; your Highness took the ring from *her*."

"'Tis rather a piquant story, friend D'Argenson; I really begin to feel greatly interested in the sister who is at liberty; is she as beautiful as the other, eh?"

"She surpasses her, Highness."

"Does she still reside in the little house adjoining the Carmelites?" asked the Prince, lowering his voice.

"You surely would not carry *her* off, Highness," remarked D'Argenson, smiling at the Duke's readiness to fall into the deep plan he had concocted against the peace of the Baron's family.

"A bird in the hand, Monseigneur;" retorted the fickle Prince, laughing: "thou knowest the proverb."

"Well," insinuated D'Argenson, "we can easily trap this one;" and he peered intently into the face of D'Orleans, to note the effect his words produced.

The latter exchanged with him a quick glance of intelligence, and whispered in his ear:

"How, and when could it be done, friend D'Argenson?"

"If you desire it Highness," replied the latter, "by to-morrow night the girl shall be safely caged."

"Where?" asked D'Orleans, breathless with excitement.

"I will have her conveyed to the Convent of the *Sœurs de la Madeaine de Trainel*," answered D'Argenson.

The Duke placed a hand in that of the Lieutenant's, silently intimating his assent to the arrangement; and was about to make some further remark, when he suddenly started hurriedly exclaiming:

"Did'st thou hear that noise, Monseigneur?"

"What noise, Highness?"

The Duke did not answer; but with a promptness that might have proved fatal to the individual concealed, he drew his sword and thrust it through the drapery, much to the astonishment of D'Argenson who saw no motive for the act; the point however only perforated the panes of the window, for finding that he had betrayed himself, the listener had with the rapidity of light made his escape through the casement.

The clatter of the broken glass, attracted the attention of the guests, who rose in a mass and as well as they could, rushed pell-mell to the spot where the Duke and D'Argenson were standing.

"Lights! Lights!" shouted the latter, through the window, "there's a man in the garden," and marking the shadow of the fugitive as it receded, he leaped out, and followed in pursuit—an example immediately imitated by the Prince and as many of the male guests whose legs were capable of accomplishing the task, the ladies remaining in the greatest consternation: long however before any one could come up with him, the man had scaled the wall, and disappeared.

"*Allons!*" said D'Orleans, speaking to the lackeys—who had now arrived with torches, and were running about wildly in every direction, examining spots where of all others they were least likely to find the fugitive—"the horse has escaped—shut up the stable! Friends;" continued he, addressing his guests; "let us return and finish the night."

"Very strange!" observed every body.

"This can be only Jacques," muttered D'Argenson to himself: "fortunately, however, she is, by this time, safely housed."

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW JEANNE DE ST. AUNEY WAS ABDUCTED FROM THE CONVENT OF THE SISTERS DE LA MADELEINE DU TRAINEL.*

The Lieutenant of Police was not mistaken in the identity of the individual whose precipitate flight created this temporary diversion, though various were the conjectures hazarded by the company, who, differing in the main on the score of the intruder's character and of his intentions, at length arrived at the satisfactory, though somewhat indefinite conclusion, that the whole affair was very mysterious, and difficult of elucidation.

But D'Argenson himself felt certain no other than Jacques could possess a motive for committing an act of such temerity, notwithstanding his inability to conceive what that motive could be. He was too shrewd to suppose idle curiosity alone had urged him to intrude thus boldly upon the Duke's privacy, for what had he to gain or to learn by coming there? it was next to impossible that the circumstance of Jeanne's abduction from home had yet transpired; or knowing the man's unaccountable attachment to the Baron's family, he would—how extravagant soever the supposition—have attributed the bold step to his desire to learn whither she had been conveyed. On this head, however, he experienced no apprehension, the greatest caution and secrecy having been expressly observed in taking her away; and although Jacques had, in so unexpected a manner, surprised the secret, it could be of no possible use to him in so far as rescuing the girl was concerned, she being already secured: notwithstanding this fact, he had designedly given the Duke to understand that her abduction had yet to be accomplished. But even assuming the spy to be cognizant of the circumstance, nothing could lead him to infer that it would necessarily, and at a particular time, form the subject of a conversation between himself (D'Argenson) and the Duke, since the

* This order of nuns, namely, "*Les sœurs*," or "*Les Réligieuses de la Madeleine du Trainel*," was founded at Trainel in Champagne, towards the middle of the twelfth century. To escape the horrors of the wars, in 1630, they abandoned their convent, conceiling themselves in a different part of the province; in 1652, in consequence of the civil wars that raged, they entirely withdrew from Champagne and sought an asylum at Paris, taking up their abode at a private house. In 1654, they purchased a large house and a garden in the Rue de Charonne, (No. 88) where they constructed a church, and other buildings, of which Anne of Austria laid the first stone. D'Argenson became one of the principal patrons of this convent, and endowed it very richly. He placed here one of his mistresses, named Husson, who was soon after supplanted by the then superior—a young and handsome woman, and who subsequently built a chapel and dedicated it to St. Marc, D'Argenson's patron saint. At his decease, his heart was interred here.

The Duchess of Orleans much augmented the Convent, and in later years made it a residence. In 1790 it was suppressed, and turned into a cotton-manufactory.

man could not be aware of his secret intentions: the idea was too extravagant to be for a moment entertained, and therefore the Lieutenant of Police concluded that Jacques had penetrated there for the purpose of watching either his movements, or those of some of the company, but inclined more readily to the former opinion, because he had lately noted a marked alteration in the spy's demeanour—a contempt of his power—which he attributed to the man's consciousness of being himself an object of suspicion, and to his natural recklessness: nor was he deceived.

It has been shown how Jacques, depending upon the strength and the multiplicity of his own resources, found himself in a position to set his employer at defiance, and how, in order the more easily to accomplish his private ends, he subjected the Lieutenant of Police to the benefits of the same system of surveillance the latter had himself established, employing for this purpose, sometimes one of his Lutetians, at others, watching his every movement in proper person. He became thus enabled, from the first, to unmask that functionary's hypocrisy, and to secure himself against the consequences of his distrust; but at length, finding himself beaten at every point, and his most secret intentions either forestalled or frustrated, D'Argenson ended by suspecting the treachery of which he was the victim, and consequently began to act with greater caution, prosecuting his plans with increased cunning and all possible dispatch, baffling discovery, until too late, by bringing new emissaries to his assistance, and employing every kind of artifice to lead Jacques astray. But the latter in turn discovered the stratagem of his superior, and thenceforth attached himself, singly, to his steps, lest by any fortuitous accident the Lieutenant's new agents should come into collision with his own, and the existence of the secret community of the Lutetians and of their subterranean resort be discovered in consequence.

That D'Argenson no longer received information from him with the same degree of confidence as heretofore, was not to be concealed, for although at present he veiled his suspicions beneath the mask of frankness and great apparent satisfaction, the restlessness of his glance, the alteration in the tone of his voice, his forced calmness—more terrible, and more to be dreaded than any open demonstration—betrayed the fearfulness of the struggle within, leaving it not to be doubted that his malignity would manifest itself at the earliest opportunity: the silent hint was not lost upon him, and he prepared himself to meet the coming storm.

But to return to our narrative.

Having in the manner already described, rescued Father Pierre Simon, the capuchin, from the snare D'Argenson had laid to entrap him, and warned him of the danger by which he was surrounded in consequence of his equivocal position, and having, further, concerted measures to ensure the holy father's safety until he had accomplished the secret and important mission which brought him to the capital, Jacques cast off his disguise, and returned to Paris, bearing a letter to Jeanne de St. Auney from Madame de Maintenon, in which this per-

sonage apprized her of the steps she had taken to procure Julie's release, and of the king's promise to command it.

The poor girl was in tears: St. Marcel had waited upon her that morning, with the letter from Julie which Jacques had commissioned him to deliver, and which, as will be remembered, Ru placed in Jacques' hand only the night before, as the latter was on the point of leaving the Bastile. She appeared to have just completed the perusal of the welcome epistle, but evidently her heart was a prey to the intensest anguish, for she sobbed loud and frequently; her eyes too were red, and swollen for the want of repose, whilst her pallid cheek, here and there tinged with a slight flush, betrayed the anxiety to which she had all night been a prey. Old Prevôt was seated by her side, wiping her own eyes in sympathy, and endeavouring to comfort her young mistress by the most persuasive arguments to prove 'that every thing must have an end, and assuring her—as she had often said before—that every thing that happened, happened for the best.'

It was difficult to say, however, whether the old nurse or Jeanne was the most alarmed at the apparition of Jacques, who entered the apartment in which they were sitting—through the door it is true—but most unexpectedly, and in his usual quiet and mysterious manner. Prevôt was too much terrified to scream, whilst Jeanne gazed tremblingly and in silence at him, knowing him to be intimately connected with their misfortunes, and to have played a prominent part in them; she dreaded to hear him speak, lest she should find him the precursor of some fresh calamity, and was scarcely able to maintain even an appearance of composure; perceiving the effect which his presence produced, Jacques motioned them to remain seated, and addressing Jeanne, said:

"Don't be alarmed, Mademoiselle; I am only the bearer of a letter to you from Versailles."

"From Madame de Maintenon!" hurriedly exclaimed Jeanne, reassured by his respectful deportment and the frankness of his manner; "I ought to have waited upon her to-day, but—" here she burst into a fresh flood of tears, which prevented her from completing the sentence.

Jacques, who knew the subject uppermost in her mind, abstained from making any remark relative to her father, and handing her the letter, continued:

"I saw Madame de Maintenon this morning; she requested me to deliver this into your hands; finding that you did not come to Versailles, she was unwilling to keep you in suspense."

Jeanne took the letter and read it, first to herself, and then aloud to Prevôt, who became very busy with her pocket-handkerchief, for her attachment to Julie was almost maternal, and the prospect of her speedy liberation, made her shed tears of joy.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Jeanne, wiping her eyes as she finished the perusal of the letter; "we *shall* then, dear nurse, see our beloved Julie again. But where—where can my poor father be?"

"Most *re*-markable!" chimed in Prevôt; "do you know, Sir—" this was addressed to the spy—"that Monsieur le Baron left home last evening to go to the Bastile and fetch Mademoiselle Julie, and he has not yet returned. A most *re*-markable circumstance, isn't it? *I* say they have kept him there."

"Don't, Prevôt; don't for mercy's sake torture me by such dreadful surmises," observed Jeanne, making an ineffectual attempt to preserve her calmness; "thou hast done nothing else the whole night, and to-day too. My own conjectures are sad enough, and make me shudder; thou should'st rather endeavour to give me courage to bear up against them, than deprive me of the little that I have."

"Well, child," remonstrated the positive matron, "and isn't it best to meet troubles half-way? they don't come so heavy then, and it is a most *re*-markable—"

"Oh, sir," ejaculated Jeanne, addressing herself to Jacques, and sobbing as she spoke, "do you know, or have you heard anything of my poor dear father? If you have, pray tell me, and relieve me from suspense! You are employed by Monsieur D'Argenson, and can tell me if any person can! I know that you have been to the Bastile very recently; is my father there?"

"How do you know that I have been there so recently?" asked Jacques; somewhat astonished at the maiden's assertion.

"The Sieur St. Marcel," answered Jeanne, "who left us but an hour or two ago, told me that 'twas you commissioned him to deliver to me this letter from my sister; I conjectured the remainder."

"A *re*-markably sensible young man," muttered Prevôt aside, alluding to St. Marcel; "and says he believes in cards and fortune-telling."

Jacques, although moved almost to tears by the anguish of the beautiful suppliant, felt disinclined to confide to her the dreadful secret that he had surprised, lest he should compromise his own safety; he therefore hesitated to answer Jeanne's question:

"I was at the Bastile, last night," he at length said, "but I fear you will not thank me for the news I shall give you—"

"Nay! nay! speak! I beg!" answered Jeanne, breathless with excitement; "any thing is better than suspense."

"I have a great respect for you, Mademoiselle," again remarked the spy; "I may call it even friendship, and I know I can rely upon your discretion; but will you answer for that of your companion there?" and he pointed to Prevôt.

"Answer for *my* discretion indeed," exclaimed the dame, with an air of wounded dignity, perking herself up, and tossing her head; "I can answer for my own; I arrived long ago at years of discretion, I can tell you; and when a girl, I was always *re*-markable for discretion—"

"I can trust Prevôt with any secret," observed Jeanne, inwardly anticipating Jacques' communication; "you may therefore speak without fear.

"For your father's sake, then," replied Jacques, "for the sake of

your sister, nay, for your own, do not let it transpire that you communicate with them: your imprudence might involve me in trouble, and deprive you of your only protector."

"Gracious Heavens!" ejaculated Jeanne, in a scarcely audible voice, and turning pale as a corpse; "what do you mean? In pity's sake let me know the worst at once."

"I do not know the worst myself," responded he: "but I grieve to say that your father is once more in the power of Monseigneur D'Argenson."

"Most *re*-markable!" cried Prevôt; "didn't I say so!"

"I anticipated this," murmured Jeanne, sinking back in her chair, and sobbing hysterically; "my poor dear father then is again a prisoner in the Bastile! Have *you*," she added, after a pause, and in a tone of agony that cut him to the heart; "have *you* had a hand in this?"

The question was so direct, and came so unexpectedly, that it threw Jacques off his guard; the blood flew from his cheeks; and his trepidation—notwithstanding the powerful efforts he made to master it—became too apparent to escape the notice of his fair interrogator; he answered not a word, but averting his eyes, stood with them bent towards the ground, overcome by his emotion.

"I see," said she, noticing his embarrassment; "I see how it is! You *have* had a hand in this transaction, too, and are now ashamed of the foul part you have played! Here! here is gold for the information you have given me—leave my presence—let me never more behold you. I shall yet find friends in Paris."

"Stay!" answered Jacques, haughtily, at the same time setting aside the hand extended towards him with the proffered recompense; "I *was* instrumental in causing the imprisonment both of your father and sister; I confess it! But had it not been for me, you would still be in suspense as to their fate! Know, that through me alone must you hope to see them delivered; I have sworn to attempt their release!"

Jeanne listened to him with surprise; the man, whom but a moment before she despised, suddenly became fraught with mysterious interest: his words were big with meaning, and full of determination; there was something too in his gaze that inspired her with secret confidence, the influence of which she already experienced; she now remembered that Julie spoke of him in her letter—of the manner in which he rescued her from St. Marc's brutality on the night of her incarceration—how he had enforced, in her favour, the strict observance of the terms of the letter of anticipation—how too he had promised, "with Heaven's assistance" to save her, and how when he said so, she felt his tears fall upon her cheek: all this Jeanne remembered, as also her father's recital of the same man's conduct towards him, and she began to attach to his words, the importance she had at first denied them, or at least hesitated to believe they merited. The more she thought of the position of her father, but especially of her sister's—for whom her sympathies were naturally most alive—the more anxious she became; for the more clearly did she perceive the dangers to which she was

exposed: her father's account of the scene that preceded his temporary liberation, recurred to her memory with painful minuteness, and with the acuteness of perception, common to woman-kind, she caught a partial glimpse of the vile motives which had actuated the Duke of Chartres to take a part in that odious plot: she shuddered, and trembled for Julie, and yet could see no possible means of rescuing her, for Madame de Maintenon's letter led her to infer that her protectress could do no more than she had already done: therefore nothing remained but to await the issue of her intercession, and that of Louis' command.

But then, what did Jacques mean by asserting that he alone could effect their release? As D'Argenson's confidential agent, did he possess any secret information connected with his employer's ulterior views, which neither Madame de Maintenon, nor still less Louis Quatorze were aware of? She could not explain the discrepancy otherwise; and although doubting neither the sincerity of her protectress, nor the word of the King, she could not conceal from herself—in spite of her repeated attempts to do so—that neither the influence of the former—as Madame de Maintenon herself stated at their first interview—nor the power of the latter, were likely to avail against the cunning and the determined malignity of her father's persecutor.

It may here be remarked, that her surmise regarding the spy's acquaintance with D'Argenson's views respecting the Baron and Julie, was unfounded, for Jacques possessed no certain information on that head, his own natural shrewdness, and profound penetration alone, leading him to infer that their fate was less in the hands of the King than in those of the Lieutenant of Police and his minions at the Bastile; and upon this conviction was based his assertion to Jeanne.

These reflections rushed upon her mind with all the rapidity that excitement and intense moral suffering engender; she beheld at a glance, the dangers by which she was surrounded, in common with her father and her sister; nothing connected with their misfortunes and their present position remained conjectural; every thing, on the contrary, assumed an air of certainty which no sophistry of hope or doubt could invalidate: but towards whom should she turn for assistance when the highest authority of the realm was defied by its underlings! To confide in the extraordinary being before her appeared a desperate step, but the ill was desperate, and no other remedy suggested itself; thus her conclusions gradually became favourable to Jacques, whom she again addressed, and in a tone that no longer betrayed distrust:

"Who are you, strange man?" said she; "and what motive have you for secretly befriending those whom you openly persecute? for you are the agent of our enemy."

"You have cause to judge me harshly," answered the spy, in a voice tremulous with emotion; "but I am used to injustice, and can pardon those who condemn from ignorance. *I* am unknown to you, though not to Monsieur le Baron; nor was my father; but many years have elapsed since they were in connection."

"And who then was your father?" asked Jeanne, deeply interested: "and where is he?"

"Dead!" responded Jacques, in a half-choked voice; "but it would serve no end to satisfy your inquiry respecting him, nor to inform you of the design that brought me, a few years since, to Paris: chance revived my old associations with your family, and this must suffice you to know, at present."

"We have much to condemn in your conduct," replied Jeanne; "and yet much to thank you for; my father and Julie have both spoken of you with feelings of gratitude for the protection you have afforded them, and I am willing to believe—nay can almost answer for them too—that the injury you have inflicted upon us, has been involuntary."

"Believe it, Mademoiselle;" ejaculated the spy; "for although I court no thanks for doing my duty, I am unwilling silently to bear undeserved censure! As soon as I have obtained further intelligence of your relatives, you shall hear from me again: nay, if you wish to communicate with them, I will undertake to convey your letters; but I caution you on no account to mention the circumstance to any person except the Sieur St. Marcel, in whom alone I can place reliance: much depends upon your secrecy; more than you can conjecture."

"I can only offer you my thanks Sir," observed Jeanne, her face glowing with renewed hope; "and you may rely upon it, that for all our sakes, nothing shall escape from my lips."

"Nor from mine," chimed in Prevôt, puckering up her mouth as though she intended never again to open it; "I wouldn't say a word for the world."

On receiving Jeanne's assurance, Jacques bowed to her with a degree of grace which it astonished her to find in a man of his rough exterior, and quitted the apartment as mysteriously as he had introduced himself, leaving her, if not entirely resigned to the fresh calamity that had befallen her, at any rate fully impressed with the belief that it was not irremediable.

But day after day passed by, without any further intelligence transpiring from Jacques; she thence inferred that his exertions to procure the release of her relatives, had not yet proved more successful than Madame de Maintenon's intercession; in the interim, however, she took advantage of the spy's offer, and forwarded to him through the medium of St. Marcel—with whom she was in daily communication—a letter for Julie, and a second for her father, looking forward with daily-increasing anxiety, to their answer, in the anticipation of discovering some clue to the mystery that seemed to enshroud the whole transaction.

At length, some hours after dusk on the same evening that Jacques introduced himself so unexpectedly to the notice of the guests assembled in the Duke of Chartres' pavilion, and whilst Jeanne was speculating with Dame Prevôt upon the probable issue of her father's and her sister's fate, two strangers, in the garb of priests, were announced by old Antoine the domestic, as desirous of seeing her upon a matter

of life and death. Being instantly admitted—for her thoughts immediately reverted to the cherished objects of her affection—they informed her, with great show of sympathy and commiseration, that they came to conduct her to the convent of the Sœurs de la Madeleine du Trainel, whither her sister had been conveyed, in a dying state, from the Bastile.

The suddenness of the shock almost prostrated her, but summoning all her fortitude to meet the emergency, she hurried on her cloak, unhesitatingly confiding herself to the care of the holy men—whose garb was well calculated to disarm suspicion—and set out with them on foot for the convent, leaving Prevôt behind in the greatest grief; for notwithstanding her tears and intreaties to be permitted to accompany her, the strangers insisted upon the matron remaining at home, consoling her with an assurance that she should be sent for if her young lady grew worse.

Jeanne—whose anguish was extreme—felt her limbs sink beneath her as she proceeded on her road, and was several times compelled to stop to gather strength to continue her journey, weeping and sobbing the whole time; when they reached the Bastile, her emotion became so violent, that even her conductors were touched; they urged her onwards, notwithstanding, supporting her between them, until they arrived at the convent—situated in the Rue de Charrone—where they quitted her, leaving her in the custody of the Abbess.

And here Jeanne, for the first time, began to suspect she had been made the victim of some vile artifice, for the embarrassment visible in the superior's demeanour, and the sinister whisperings which passed between her and the sub-abbess, led her to conclude, that although her arrival was expected, the object for which she had been brought was not such as her abductors represented.

"Where, Madam," said she, addressing the superior, "where is my sister?"

"Thy sister, my child!" replied the latter; "we are all thy sisters here."

"Do not trifle with my feelings, I beseech you," reiterated Jeanne, bursting into tears; "I mean Julie; my own sister: whom they brought here from the Bastile, and whom they told me was dying!"

"Thou art labouring under some mistake, my child," answered the Abbess; "no one of the sisterhood, here, is dying; thou wert brought hither previous to thy transfer to the Carmelites; is it not so, sister Martha?" this was addressed to the sub-abbess.

"And by whose orders, Madam," asked Jeanne, without allowing sister Martha time to reply, "have I been brought hither? There surely was no necessity for employing so cruel an artifice to mislead me."

"I cannot answer thee, child, upon this point," resumed the haughty matron; "perhaps to-morrow thou wilt be more enlightened. Sister Martha shall conduct thee to thy chamber for the night; I shall expect to see thee at matins."

"This is some foul plot against my liberty," exclaimed Jeanne, the

blood rushing into her cheeks, "to which I will not tamely submit. I demand to be instantly released, Madam; you have no right to detain me against my will."

"Child, child;" remonstrated the Abbess, with a show of humility, "let me exhort thee to patience and forbearance; thou askest more of me than I can grant; I am responsible to high authority for thy safety."

"You have spoken truth," retorted Jeanne; "for Heaven will exact of you an account of those who are committed to your care. If harm happen to me, on your head be the penalty."

"Thou ravest, child," observed the matron with clouded brow; "I do not comprehend how harm can befall thee here; and the holy sisterhood of the Carmelites are renowned for piety and virtue."

"The convent of the Carmelites adjoins my dwelling," replied the maiden: "it is therefore certain that to transfer me to it, was not the object for which I was brought hither. 'Tis you, Madam, who are deceived; you have been imposed upon by an artful falsehood, the sin of which, if you refuse to give credit to me, will lie at your door."

"*Benedicite*, my child," ejaculated the Abbess, extending her hand, and turning on her heel; "Sister Martha, see her to her chamber."

"Nay, Madam," exclaimed Jeanne, clinging to her skirt in order to detain her; "by this holy symbol of our common faith," here she seized the cross of massive gold that depended from the Abbess's girdle, and raised it before her eyes, "I do conjure you to allow me to depart hence! You have been deceived, as I have! Indeed, indeed! 'tis true! I have a father—a dear father, and a dear, fond sister, who have both been taken from me, and plunged into the dungeons of the Bastile; and the same fate, or a worse one perhaps, is intended me! 'Tis false that I am vowed to the Church! On my soul —on my hopes of salvation, I swear 'tis false! Behold me at your feet! 'tis the first time I ever knelt to mortal! I pray you—I implore you, let me go my way, and I will remember you night and day in my prayers!"

The stern stuff of which ambition ought to be made, doubtless entered, for a great deal, in the composition of the Abbess; perhaps she was accustomed to such supplications—for in those days it was no unusual occurrence to incarcerate young females in convents against their inclination, their opposition to an inflexible parent's will, or the cupidity of their kindred, often determining these parties to adopt such a course in order to punish the disobedience of the child, or to despoil the heiress of her heritage. In the present instance, whatever might have been the Abbess's private thoughts and feelings, she betrayed no symptoms of possessing the latter, whilst the former appeared to be all concentrated in the ceiling, for towards that portion of the room, she turned her eyes whilst Jeanne addressed her, endeavouring the whole time to disengage herself from the maiden's grasp, which she at last succeeded in effecting; when once more extending her hand over Jeanne's head, she exclaimed, in an abstracted tone:

"*Benedicite*, my child;" and hastened out of the apartment.

As soon as the Abbess was gone, Sister Martha raised the weeping girl, and strove to console her, but her assurances failed to produce the effect intended, although Jeanne appeared conscious that they were kindly meant:

"Must I then consider myself a prisoner here?" she ejaculated, with an effort to overcome her agitation; "alas! that I should be thus persecuted."

"Come this way, sister," said her companion, in a mild tone of voice; "I wish it were in my power to set thee free! But do not despair! Place thy trust in Him above; he will not fail thee in the hour of need!"

So saying she preceded Jeanne, leading the way across the great court to the western wing of the building; they soon arrived at a small chamber, neatly furnished, but only with the bare necessaries, which Sister Martha indicated as that in which Jeanne was to pass the night, and having embraced her on both cheeks, and pronounced a parting *benedicite*, left her alone to her sorrows.

Thus far, D'Argenson's villainous plot had succeeded: he now held the whole family of the Baron within his grasp, and nothing remained but to accomplish their destruction. For the abduction of Jeanne—which he resolved upon effecting only subsequently to procuring the King's warrant for the detention of her father and her sister—he knew he might depend upon his emissaries, whom he first instructed for the odious task; thus, it was not surprising that he should make light of the knowledge Jacques so surreptitiously acquired of this portion of his plan, since by speaking of it only after its accomplishment, he had placed it out of the spy's power to frustrate it; he therefore returned to the convivial table with a mind free from apprehension on the score of the unfortunate maiden's safety, and joined the general hilarity with a zest he had up to that moment abstained from exhibiting: the company finished the night by one of those disgraceful bacchanalian orgies, as the chief promoter of which the Duke became in after years so famous. Save the mark!

But Jacques, believing there was yet time to warn Jeanne of her danger, determined to make immediate use of the information he had obtained, and to put her at once upon her guard, or to convey her to a place of safety; thus, having escaped from his pursuers, he bent his steps towards the Baron's residence in the Rue d'Enfer, and although it was now four o'clock in the morning, did not hesitate to arouse the inmates, conscious that the greatest expedition alone could save the Baron's daughter from D'Argenson's meditated villany. How great was his astonishment on discovering that the cunning of the latter had forestalled him! He perceived at a glance, that matters between them had attained a crisis, when to dissimulate would no longer be policy, and that it was now necessary to throw off the mask and declare himself openly as his antagonist! If however, he attempted to rescue Jeanne, no time was to be lost, for doubtless the Lieutenant of Police would, when the Duke's party broke up, repair

to his hotel—which adjoined the convent whither his intended victim had been smuggled—and the risk attached to the accomplishment of the project he contemplated, would thereby be materially increased. To hesitate was madness; therefore with an energy of purpose, and a promptitude peculiar to himself, he resolved upon making one bold push to save her, notwithstanding the difficulties of the undertaking.

Having assured himself that the convent to which she had been conveyed was the same one mentioned by D'Argenson, he set out for it, revolving in his mind, as he went along, the kind of stratagem he should employ to obtain an interview with her. This point settled, he loitered in the immediate neighbourhood of the convent, until the chapel-bells chimed the early *angelus*, summoning the sisters to matins, when, upon making himself known, he was immediately admitted into the presence of the Abbess, for D'Argenson's visits to her—and Jacques' in consequence, as his confidential emissary—were very frequent; more so perhaps, than was consistent with the fair recluse's wide reputation for immaculateness, and the character of the religious establishment over which she presided.

"*Benedicite*, brother," exclaimed the matron, as Jacques entered; "thou art an early visiter: something extraordinary brings thee!"

"I come with a message from Monseigneur D'Argenson," replied the spy, "to the young woman who was brought hither by his orders last night. I must deliver it to her myself! Can I see her?"

"In my presence, brother;" responded the Abbess, casting her eyes downwards; "thou canst not remain alone in her company."

"Be it so," answered Jacques, after a short pause; "but send for her quickly, for time with me is precious!"

Ringing a small silver hand-bell, the Abbess summoned Sister Martha, and bade her conduct Jeanne unto her presence, indulging, during her short absence, in sundry remarks indicative of her astonishment at the motive of the spy's early visit, but to which the latter returned no reply.

Great was Jeanne's surprise to find Jacques waiting to receive her; he did not however afford her an opportunity of expressing her feelings, for taking her hand, as she entered, he bowed to the Abbess, saying, whilst a smile of satisfaction curled his lip—

"I am sorry, *Madame l'Abbesse*, to deprive you so soon of your *protegée*, but she must accompany me hence."

"Was that thy message from Monseigneur?" exclaimed the petrified matron.

"That is my business, Madam;" retorted he; "come, Mademoiselle," he continued, speaking to Jeanne, who stood irresolute; "the time is yet ours;" adding, in a whisper; "I am come to rescue you."

Jeanne, unable to answer, grasped his hand with a fervor that caused the blood to mantle into his cheeks, and at once resigned herself to his custody. But by this time, the Abbess had recovered her presence of mind, and no longer doubtful of the real state of

things, attempted to drag her back, rating Sister Martha for remaining inactive, and threatening to alarm the establishment.

"Save yourself that trouble Madam," said Jacques, calmly, at the same time retreating from her, and taking Jeanne beneath his cloak; "the sisterhood have forsworn my sex. But to prevent your kind intention, I will take the liberty of"—here he suddenly disappeared through the door, locking it after him, and carrying away the key.

He now made the best of his way to the outer gate, which was at once opened by the unsuspecting porter, to whom, as he departed, he threw the key of the chamber in which the Abbess was confined, mystifying him to an alarming extent, by observing that he might set her free as soon as he judged convenient.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Jeanne, looking up with tearful eyes into the spy's face; "thank Heaven! I am once more free!"

"You are not yet safe, Mademoiselle," answered Jacques, in a husky voice, as he hurried her along, concealing her beneath his large cloak; "you must take immediate refuge at the Carmelites. D'Argenson's power will not reach you there."

"But my father!" she exclaimed; "my sister!"

"Both are well!" replied he; "I know no more!"

Within two hours from that time Jeanne was an inmate of the Carmelites.

CHAPTER XXX.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT EVERY BODY, IN GENERAL, AND A FEW MORE ABOUT ST. MARCEL AND DEMOCRITUS, IN PARTICULAR.

But where was St. Marcel whilst these events were progressing?

Since his first interview with Jeanne de St. Auney, in the gardens of the Luxembourg, he had entirely forsaken his former companions—who still kept up their nightly revels at the Commandant's—and attached himself, almost wholly, to his new associates, the Lutetians: we say—*almost wholly*—because, apart from his military duties, his time was divided between them and Jeanne, on the score of whose well-being his solicitude appeared to increase in a most extraordinary manner, his inquiries respecting the same, forming the ostensible object of his daily visits.

Even a casual observer, however, might have noticed a marked alteration in his general conduct and habits, which, from being notoriously irregular and dissipated, suddenly became steady and decorous—a circumstance so unaccountable, that it began to occupy the attention of his brother-officers, his abstraction, forming the main subject of their conversation, exposing him to their severest railleries, wheresoever and whensoever they met him. But a smile, or perhaps a jibe in

Jacques offers [illegible]

return, was the only reply he condescended to make—steeling himself against even his old friend the Commandant's questionings, resolutely refusing—though giving no reason for the same—to join his comrades, as formerly, at his hospitable board.

He might, indeed, have been seen, early and late, walking alone, pensively, up and down the little avenue, called the *Avenue of the Grotto*, in which he first beheld Jeanne; but there was nothing in this—oh no! for most persons love to saunter about alone in gardens!

At other times he remained seated, for hours together, beneath the tall birch whose leafless branches had sheltered her on the morning in question; but there was nothing in this, either: oh no! for some persons may have a great fancy for sitting by the hour under a leafless tree, in the middle of winter!

One day, when nobody was near, he cut an initial into the bark of that same tree—and very elaborately cut it was too—but there was nothing in *that*, although the letter *was* a J! oh no! for many names begin with a J!

Nor was there any thing in his visiting her so frequently, for what could be more innocent of design than his daily inquiry after her health—and his request to be permitted to call again on the morrow—and so on, until his visit came to be looked forward to as a thing of course!

The emotion too that he experienced when in her presence was perfectly natural, and easily accounted for, since few men can frequent the society of a beautiful girl without acknowledging the potency of her charms, or in some measure betraying their secret influence over them!

It was likewise quite in accordance with the spirit of gallantry, for which the court and the times of Louis the Fourteenth were so celebrated, that St. Marcel should feel immensely interested in the occupations that engrossed the leisure of the Baron's daughter; if he found her engaged upon a design—or a painting—or a piece of embroidery, nothing could be more proper than that he should prepare her colours—or arrange her canvass—or settle her easel—or cleanse her pencils—or even thread her needles—nay, even set a few stitches himself, and compare them with her's, stealing every opportunity of railing at his own clumsiness, and admiring her dexterity! There really was nothing in all this; oh no!

Yet, it sometimes happened—always accidentally of course, because if done designedly, there would have been something in it—it sometimes happened, say we, that his hand would touch her's—the very least bit in the world—scarcely could a brush of a feather be lighter—when there would ensue on his part, a sudden palpitation of the heart—a confusion—a tremulousness—certain to lead to his doing the very same thing again the next opportunity that offered, although undesignedly still; causing the blood to mantle into her cheeks, and as rapidly rush back into her veins—whilst she would cast down her swimming eyes, and endeavour to keep her snowy bosom from heav-

ing, lest he should perceive she had noticed his indiscretion, and think he had offended her thereby!

Then again—and only the very night before her abduction, as they stood side by side at the casement, discoursing upon the beauties of Nature, and watching the moon as it rose in the clear frosty sky, and eclipsed the merry stars that twinkled around her—it was very natural that her thoughts should revert to her sister and her father, and that she should weep—and that, seeing her weep, he should endeavour to comfort and encourage her with the hopes of brighter days in store for all—and that she should then turn her beautiful bright eyes upon him to thank him for his compassion—and that he should look into those swimming eyes of her's, and burn with a secret desire to brush away the tears that obscured them, with his lips, and yet content himself with only the wish to be permitted to do so! All this was very natural—but beyond this there was nothing in it!

'Tis true Dame Prevôt began to throw out certain obscure hints and innuendoes intended to imply her intimate conviction—founded upon experience—that St. Marcel meant more than her young mistress suspected—nay, had even conceived an affection for her, which he was only watching his opportunity to declare, adducing in proof of the position she assumed, many instances of a similar nature, not one of the least *re*-markable of which she had, when a girl, been herself the subject. But to all she said, Jeanne proffered no reply—although blushed very much, and hung down her head, and appeared very much confused—but was there any thing in that? oh no!

Notwithstanding, however, that St. Marcel gave less of his company to his late associates, and more of it to his Lutetian brethren, one of the former engrossed a considerable share of his thoughts: this was St. Leu, whose extraordinary disappearance from the Commandant's residence, none of his comrades could explain, not even St. Marcel himself, until the revelations of the vintner, Pommier, at the Emperor's council, coupled with Jacques' previous communications, led him to infer the truth. To inform his brother-officers and Schwillwein of his fate, would have been to betray at once, the secret of his association with the formidable body of spies; he therefore allowed them to exercise their ingenuity in surmises respecting the same, hoping every day that the Duke—satisfied with incarcerating him for a short period—would of his own accord set him at liberty. Yet, being aware of the circumstances under which St. Leu's arrest had taken place, he could not entirely reconcile this neutral course with the line of conduct that he felt himself in honor bound to pursue; namely: to seek an interview with the Duke de Chartres, declare himself as the real aggressor, and beg St.Leu's release, throwing himself upon the Duke's magnanimity. More than once he was on the point of obeying this generous impulse—so natural to him—but as often renounced his determination, hesitating lest he should be mistaken as to the motives of the Duke, who might perhaps have been incited to imprison St. Leu in the Bastile, merely from a desire to rid himself of the man who stood between him and the object of his irregular passion: in which case, he would be only exposing him-

self without benefiting his comrade, wherefore he finally deemed it most prudent to allow matters to take their course.

But to Jeanne, the young man's absence appeared so unaccountable, that it naturally soon formed the subject of many a conversation between herself and St. Marcel—conversations that renewed his scruples with tenfold force. Nor was the silence of her sister's lover the least mysterious part of the affair; and finding herself incompetent to solve the problem otherwise, she began to place some little faith in Dame Prevôt's auguries, and to fear that St. Leu had indeed experienced the same fate as his betrothed—a surmise which the old nurse substantiated by adducing a multitude of proofs, each equally infallible, which had presented themselves to her in the shape of dreams and warnings, but had 'come out most *re*-markably in the cards,' in the course of her mysterious consultations therewith.

With respect to St. Marcel, the diverse emotions these events engendered, produced a corresponding effect upon his spirits; so marked indeed, that his now intimate friend and companion, Democritus, swore most positively, that he must be under the influence of the passion which is said to keep the world in motion—an assertion St. Marcel rebutted with contempt—or at least with a great demonstration of it—and in the most unequivocal manner possible.

On the night of Jeanne's abduction, having, as usual, passed some hours of that day in her company, he repaired to the *Palais des Thermes*; but his spirits appeared to have lost their buoyancy; he sat apart from his companions, abstracted and grave, nor scarcely could the vivacity of the philosopher arouse him from the revery into which he fell.

"Thou art as dull as an owl at noon-day," said he, filling up their glasses to the very brim; "why dost not thou follow my example; drink, friend Marcellus; there's no reckoning to pay. Art thou thinking of the cruel fair one? I warrant thee that—though her charms may be fair enough—thou wilt find more in this pitcher."

"I am thinking," replied St. Marcel, smiling in spite of himself, "that we shall soon be left to our own company; our friends seem to be seeking their pallet; a sign that we ought to seek our's; it must be near two o'clock."

"Never mind that," remonstrated the philosopher; "nothing calls us up in the morning! Retire to bed, indeed! no! no! we must empty this pitcher first. Look, how the wine sparkles in my goblet! Why, a Turk could'nt resist the temptation! But as thou wert saying, we shall indeed be left alone at last; our companions are tired of waiting for the Emperor. Come, friend Marcellus; draw up to the fire; we'll throw on a log or two of wood, and if we can't pass a merry hour yet, my name is not—" but here he stopped short, looking very earnestly into St. Marcel's face.

"Well! never mind," he continued, after a short pause; "I promised to tell thee my adventures, friend Marcellus, and I do not know but that the present opportunity is as favorable as any we may have again, so, if thou dost not object to listen—"

"On the contrary," responded St. Marcel, pleased beyond measure at the prospect of learning the history of his midnight companion; "I have looked forward to the relation of thy adventures with much impatience; say on, Democritus."

But the philosopher possessed certain notions on the score of comforts that he proceeded to carry out before he commenced his narration. First of all he threw three or four logs upon the dying embers, and having fanned them into a blaze with the remnant of hat that he wore, placed near the now cheerful fire, a bench for himself, and opposite to that a second for his companion, setting between them the table laden with the newly-replenished pitcher: these arrangements completed, he extended his legs along the bench, propping his back against the chimney-corner, and refreshed himself with a brimming glass, smacking his lips, as, after a short pause, he thus began:

THE STORY OF DEMOCRITUS.

"We have a trite proverb, friend Marcellus, that says '*friendship is a tree of deep root, but slow growth!*' This may be true enough in particular instances, but I don't think it applies as a general principle. I am of opinion that although the root of the tree may indeed strike deep, the tree itself grows very fast; for there are certain friendships—especially those which spring up in youth—which are contracted at first sight, and become as sincere and lasting as if they had existed half a century. Of this nature is—on my part at least—the friendship that has arisen between us. Had I known thee from childhood, I don't think I could have been more thy friend than I now am; indeed, did I not experience this feeling towards thee, I should not acquaint thee with my history.

"I am a native of Britanny, and was born—not a hundred leagues from the port of St. Malo—in the *château* that formed my mother's dowry on her marriage with my father. They had but me, and I had scarcely attained my tenth year when my mother paid the debt of nature; within two years after her decease my father died also, leaving me—until I became of age—to the care of an elder brother of his, whose estate adjoined his own; and I may here mention that up to the time of my father's demise—when they were reconciled to each other—this was the only connection that had for many years existed between these two branches of the family.

"There is an inconvenience attendant upon being born rich, friend Marcellus; at least I have found it so; although I don't regret the price at which I have bought my experience. The inconvenience I allude to is, that the being born rich, exposes a man of liberal disposition, to all sorts of vexations, from the moment that he determines upon not ruining himself to benefit his friends. Upon being sent to Paris, to receive the education suitable to my rank and to the position I was to occupy in the *beau monde*, I found the spirit of courtiership alive even amongst my fellow collegians, who, knowing me to be wealthy, did not fail to levy heavy contributions upon my purse,

without even the remotest intention—as I subsequently discovered—of allowing me the same privilege upon their's. I remained at college until I had attained my eighteenth year, when I received intelligence of my uncle's death, and of his having left me the bulk of his property, consisting of his large estate in Britanny, together with a considerable sum in ready money. This, added to my own patrimony, was equal to a revenue of fifty thousand crowns.

"I now became my own master, and in order to commence my career with *éclat*, gave a grand banquet to all my fellow collegians, at which I made a speech, that was received with thunders of applause in consequence of my informing such as owed me money, that I forgave them the amount. I could not help remarking, however, that those who owed me most, thumped the tables longest, and shouted the loudest.

"The fame of this act of liberality spread far and wide; I set up a regular establishment, and my profuse expenditure gained me a reputation that might have vied with that of Crœsus, in the olden time. I was soon presented to our Grand Monarque, who offered me a commission in the army, which—although unknown to him, I believe—the Minister refused to grant, only the day before, to an old sub-officer. 'Tis true the latter had no right to expect it, other than as a reward for his long services; whilst I was rich, and knew nothing whatever of military duty. As the army is constituted, however, this was rather a recommendation than otherwise. But I declined accepting his Majesty's gracious offer, and had the extreme gratification of becoming instrumental in securing the promotion of the old sub-officer.

"Being possessed of a good exterior—nay, don't smile, Marcellus—I rapidly ingratiated myself into favour with the ladies of the court, and passed a life of pleasure and intrigue that I thought would never end. Still, I discovered, that how lavish soever they were willing to admit Nature had been of her favors upon my person, the numerous good qualities for which they praised me, owed much, if not the greater part of their existence to the charms, which Fortune had deposited at the bottom of my purse. This discovery caused me no little annoyance, as I began to suspect of selfishness every one who approached me; indeed I soon perceived that I was considered lawful game for all sorts of sharpers and adventurers to fly at.

"As my credit was good, my numerous friends and acquaintance—taking advantage of my easiness—did not hesitate to avail themselves of a privilege I had never granted them, to use my name as a means of supplying their own exigencies. One of them had the audacity to order a sedan-chair to be made for himself, and then to visit me in it, bringing me the account to settle, insisting that I had, in a fit of vinous abstraction, a few nights previously, authorized him to do so! Did I make one at a party of pleasure, I was always victimized for the expenses! Did I join the gaming-table, Fortune always frowned upon me; for by some fatality, my adversaries were certain to hold

every point, though I have now good reason to believe that they fleeced me! Then, accounts of every description—bonds that I had been induced to sign, to save some one or other of my companions from ruin—debts of honour that I had never contracted, and various other tribulations of a similar nature poured in upon me, the settlement of which—absorbed as I was in pleasure—was too heavy a tax upon my time, and I therefore passed them over to my steward, who in turn proved ungrateful, and when my affairs became embarrassed, quitted my service, and with his wages and his pickings together—which he had saved up—purchased an estate near his native town in Normandy.

"Thou mayest imagine, friend Marcellus, that whilst I cut so great a figure at court, and in the fashionable circles of the capital, I was considered a desirable match; but as I had not then met with a being capable of inspiring me with love, I remained firm in my resolution not to marry until such a one crossed my path!

"I had already passed three years thus, when an event occurred which I consider now as the most fortunate that could have happened to me, for to it—although calamitous at the time—I attribute much of the good since effected in me, but most certainly the subsequent retrievement of my shattered fortunes.

"Amongst those into whose intimacy I was admitted, was one Count de C—— an old impotent, who in his seventy-fifth year took into his head to marry a young wife, scarcely more than a third of his age, who, though of noble family, had nothing but her beauty and her nobility to recommend her to notice—qualifications, that at the present day, require others of a more substantial nature to back them. Not that the young Estelle—I shall call her so, friend Marcellus—need have remained unmarried so long, unless from choice, for many offers were made her, which she refused. Her ambition, it would appear, vaulted higher than to the simple honors of *bourgeoisie!* Being accidentally thrown into the old Count's way, he offered her his hand, which she did not hesitate to accept. They were married, the happy bridegroom settling upon her head, inalienably, one half of his income as long as she lived. The bargain was a dear one, but then he was in his dotage, and old children are often more silly than young ones. It was soon perceived, however, that notwithstanding the brilliant position Estelle had attained, she did not live happily with her husband. This every body expected would be the issue of so ill-assorted a marriage; some pitied the husband, others laughed at him, whilst a certain few sought to obtain in the eyes of the wife that species of favour which generally finds little favour in the eyes of a husband.

"I was one who sought her company least, and yet, of whom the Count seemed most jealous; for jealousy was his foible: but as nothing passed between us more than the common civilities and gallantries authorized by the usages of our court, he could never openly resent my attentions to Estelle. Yet, I observed, that when

her eyes met mine, she blushed, and became confused; when our hands touched, she trembled violently, and on more than one occasion, a stifled sigh broke from her bosom, which left no doubt upon my mind that she had conceived a passion for me that she was striving to vanquish.

"Oh! how I longed to hear the delicious words slip from her lovely lips! for though I loved her not, I was too vain to allow such a conquest to slip through my fingers! But how obtain an interview alone with her? even for a few moments! the Count watched her every movement with the eye of a hawk, so that a stratagem was my last and sole resource.

"I remarked that she never went out alone, except to the chapel of *Notre Dame des Champs*, which almost adjoined the Count's hotel, and that she repaired thither every morning to hear early mass, and twice a week to confession. This was sufficient for me. Providing myself with a priest's habit, and choosing a morning favorable to the execution of my project, I hastened to the church, and watching my opportunity, slipped into the confessional and assumed my disguise unperceived. Scarcely could I contain myself when I beheld her approach the place where I was sitting!

"Never did I pass moments of more exquisite emotion than when placing her mouth close to my ear—with only the small grating between her warm lips and my flushed cheek—she began her confession. I feigned deafness, and bade her come kneel at my feet! She obeyed! Taking me for her ghostly confessor, she buried her face in her hands, and leaned her head against my heart! Its throbbings alarmed her; she hesitated to proceed, fearing I was unwell, but re-assured by me, she re-commenced.

"She had come that morning determined to confess every thing to her reverend father; she had hitherto hesitated to do so, fearing his severity. She had never loved the Count her husband, but had never wronged him, though he accused her of infidelity. Yet, she had not been able to guard her heart against the inroads of a passion that had sprung up in it for one whom she durst not name! I pressed her upon this head, assuming the authority that I had for the time being usurped, and at length elicited the reluctant truth from her lips. I—I was the object of that passion!

"As she whispered my name, she clung convulsively to my bosom, and wept upon it abundantly! Forgetting the holy character I impersonated—forgetting the holy edifice in which we were—forgetting the meanness of the stratagem I had employed to extort a secret that she would probably have rather died than deliver up to my keeping—forgetting her—myself—every thing in fact but her tender avowal—I clasped her throbbing temples between my hands, and imprinted a burning kiss on her moist lips, whispering—'*Estelle! 'tis I! thy lover himself!*' But scarcely were the words uttered, than starting to her feet, she shrieked fearfully; her screams echoed through the vaulted aisles, and brought the assistants at the holy office to the spot where

we stood—I with my disguise half thrown aside, endeavouring to detain her, reckless of my own safety. She could only point to the vacant confessional and to me, for her tongue refused to articulate. The truth immediately flashed across the minds of the witnesses, who advanced to take me into custody. Taking advantage of the confusion, Estelle fled out of the church, whilst I—now seeing my danger for the first time—disengaged myself, by a violent effort, from my captors, and leaving my disguise in their hands, forced my way through the crowd, and made good my retreat; from that day, I became a marked man, and was tracked by the police with untiring perseverance.

"For some few days, however, I contrived to elude the vigilance of Monsieur La Reynie's agents—for this occurred previously to D'Argenson's appointment to his present office—when one night, leaving my place of concealment, I was suddenly seized by three men, who proceeded to drag me along, and would have succeeded in apprehending me had I not been rescued from their hands by a stranger—our Emperor in fact—who having at considerable personal risk, beaten them back, bade me follow him: this was my first introduction to Lutetia.

"He informed me that his motive for rescuing me was perfectly philanthropic, and arose spontaneously on seeing three men attack one; in return, I could only offer him my thanks and make him promises of reward upon a future day. Having acquainted him with my adventure—of which indeed he already knew something—I further besought him to allow me to remain in this subterranean abode until the affair had blown over; to this he assented, promising to apprize me of all that transpired in connection with it.

"After a lapse of two or three days he came and told me that nothing was spoken of in polite circles but my extraordinary amour with the Countess—that the old Count—furious at being made the subject of public ridicule—had procured a *lettre-de-cachet* against me—of whom the ecclesiastical authorities were determined to make a severe example—that my hôtel had already been taken possession of, and searched by the police, and seals placed in the name of the king, upon all my effects; finally, he informed me that unless I was forthcoming within three days from that time, my property, of whatever kind, would be declared forfeit to the crown, and myself banished the kingdom. After consulting with my mysterious friend, I decided upon delivering myself up to the authorities, relying upon the Emperor's assurance that he would engage power and interest in a certain quarter to compromise the affair, and bring about my release as soon as possible. Having exacted from me a solemn promise not to divulge the secret of my escape, nor that of my place of concealment, he set me at liberty: within twenty-four hours after, I was a prisoner in the Bastile.

"Thou hast doubtless heard much of the horrors of confinement in this den of crime, yet I cannot say it fell to my lot to experience any of them; for beyond the irksomeness consequent to the extreme

solitude, and the being totally cut off from all communication with the exterior, my position was almost tolerable. The money that I had about me on entering the prison, procured me, whilst it lasted, many necessaries, and often some of the luxuries of life, and the Governor, Baisemaux de Montlesun—this was before St. Marc's time—allowed me the privilege of a few books, but neither pens, paper nor ink. I have reason to believe that mine was regarded as a special case deserving favor, for my ears were often witnesses to scenes of cruelty practised in the cells, both above and beneath the one I occupied—which was No. 3 in the Bazinière—that even now, I shudder to think of.*

"I remained here a whole year, during which time I never once heard speak, nor saw a human being, except my jailer, the Governor, and the men who were on guard when I entered and when I left; and only on the two occasions mentioned, did I even see the Governor himself. I was examined on my entry—every thing of value, except my money, taken from me, registered, and sealed up in my presence, and 'tis only justice to say, that on the day of my liberation every article was faithfully restored to me.

"During my imprisonment, I had ample leisure to reflect upon the follies and extravagancies of which I had been guilty, and promised myself, if ever I regained my liberty, to make a better use of the fortune that yet remained to me, and to cast off such of my former associates whom I should find unworthy of my friendship.

"At length the day of my release arrived; the fresh air produced an effect upon me, similar to an intoxicating beverage. I reeled like a drunken man—laughed, and danced about like a lunatic—and when I had somewhat recovered my strength, set off at full speed in the direction of my hôtel, with a crowd of men, women and boys at my heels, swearing that I had escaped from Charenton mad-house.

"On making application to the proper authorities, I discovered that my release had been commanded by the king himself, but that I was condemned to pay a fine to the crown, and a second to the church, both amounting together to a far greater sum than I possessed. And now did I discover the insincerity of those who had eaten at my table during my days of prosperity.

"As far as professions went, they were all sincerely sorry for my misfortune, but regretted much their inability to assist me out of it; those who really would have advanced the money, had it not—whilst those who had, found various excuses for backing out of their former promises. Disheartened and disgusted, I sent for a notary—a stranger—and soon raised the needful sum, by selling off every article I possessed, and mortgaging my estates in Britanny. This done, I once more appeared at court, but humbled! I had passed a whole twelvemonth in thought, so no wonder! Every body stared at me,

* The Register for 1695 contains 201 names. One entry is as follows: Aug. 7th *A prisoner of distinction; Le.. Ch.. de.. M.. F... During his Majesty's pleasure* Offence. *Bringing ridicule upon the church.*

and looked upon me as some marvel, for did Louis himself scorn to laugh very heartily at my adventure, which he considered an excellent joke.

"I learned that the shock threw the poor young Countess upon a bed of sickness, from which she no sooner recovered, than she procured a deed of separation from the Count, and endowing the convent of the Sisters of *La Madeleine du Trainel* with the whole of the dowry which her husband had settled upon her for life, then sought an asylum there, taking the vows under the name of *Sister Martha*: she is a Champenoise, which accounts for her predilection in favor of this convent.

"But though restored to my former rank in society, I did not forget my benefactor, the Emperor, whom I sought, and met with. He knew of course of my release, and congratulated me upon it. I found the society of Lutetians materially augmented in number, and being desirous of seeing life in another form, unhesitatingly joined it. My position rendered me a valuable auxiliary, and the Emperor, finding he could confide in me, honored me with his confidence. I soon recognized in my new companions, qualities more congenial to my own feelings than the superficial protestations of the more polite; and, with a view to acquire a deeper insight into the motives that actuate men in general, resolved to assume a disguise complete enough to effectually conceal my identity. I chose the *chiffonnier's*, and it admirably answered my purpose.

"Often have I laughed in my sleeve as, brushing past some delicate beauty, to whom only a few nights previously, I had perhaps whispered those soft trivialities for which our century is so remarkable—I say, often have I laughed to see her shrink from my approach as from some plague-smitten leper: but then, to be sure, my costume was not unexceptionable. I have at night-fall, whilst picking up rags, bought my own silver plate, from my own servants, at my own door, and the very next day heard them declare with unblushing effrontery, that they knew nothing what had become of the missing articles.

"But I could not, were I to try, enumerate the various scenes I have witnessed, or the numberless adventures which have befallen me during my peripatetic course of life these last few years; one however I will relate, because it determined me rather more than a twelvemonth ago, to withdraw from society awhile: it is indeed so recent, that thou hast doubtless heard of it—if so, thou wilt at once recognize me.

"I have told thee how, finding myself embarrassed in consequence of my former follies, I was compelled to mortgage my estates, and retrench my expenditure to almost the bare necessaries of life. Finding that, in spite of all my economy, many years must elapse before I could hope to redeem my property, I determined upon marrying, provided I met with a woman possessing feelings and a mind congenial to my own. Candor obliges me to add, that I sought also, a wealthy partner, for my object was to regain, if possible, the brilliant position I had lost.

"The case was difficult—and fortune seemed for some time, to frown upon my hopes. At length I met with the beautiful *Elise de*—never mind her name—but alas! she was already married! Still, I adored her—with a passion that was purity itself—I was madly in love with her—could have sacrificed my life for one of her smiles—my idolatry for her, blinded me—had she been without a *sol*, and but loved me, I would for her have renounced my ambitious dreams! But she was immensely rich—beautiful as Hebe—in disposition, in mind, all I could wish! in fact with only the drawback—*only*, mark me—the drawback of being married. I strove in vain to gain one of those trifling tokens of favor that she lavished on the stranger, and denied *me*, giving myself up, when alone, to the most violent paroxysms of jealousy! Fool that I was! I had forgotten that she was a coquette!

"One day, I learnt that her husband had died of apoplexy; I rejoiced in the intelligence, for there was hope for me! But no! She appeared at court it is true, as soon as etiquette would permit her to do so without censure, but only to create havoc amongst a hundred sighing hearts! At length she noticed me—daily I appeared to increase in her favor—in a thousand little nothings she flattered me with hope—to trifles, that under ordinary circumstances would have passed unnoticed, she gave an importance not to be mistaken! Every body remarked her attentions and my devotion—every body whispered when we appeared together, and called me lucky! yet, though in public she so distinguished me, ice could not be colder than was her conduct towards me in private.

"For a long time I contented myself with sighing in secret, hoping, watching, but in vain, for an opportunity to declare my passion! At last I pressed my suit so ardently, she could no longer observe this neutral line of conduct, and repulsed my advances in a manner that stung me to the quick! I retorted in the same haughty terms, and threatened to leave her. Her only answer was a loud laugh. I turned on my heel and quitted her presence, and next day had the mortification to find her heaping her favors on a certain individual whom she knew to be my aversion. Finding myself jilted, I determined upon quitting a court life until some happy circumstance should recal me into existence. Converting into money, every article I possessed, I suddenly withdrew from public observation, and resumed the *chiffonnier's* garb, beneath which no one would now recognize the elegant Chevalier de Mont-Fleuri, the once favoured suitor of the rich, the lovely and the youthful widow of the Marquis de Beauvais.

"Don't interrupt me, friend Marcellus; I see thou art surprised to find me thus disguised—for though, to my recollection we never met before the evening on which I introduced thee to the Emperor, my adventures cannot have failed to reach thy ears, and in thus far we are old acquaintances. But I have not yet lost hope, for I find that the Marquise remains a widow. I intend to make another attempt upon her heart, and if I fail in it, will thenceforth renounce the sex! This, friend Marcellus, is my story up to the time I met thee at the water-side, since when, nothing but what thou knowest of,

has occurred to me worth mentioning. Come! there's one more glass a-piece left in the bottom of the pitcher. Here's success to us both, and increase to our friendship: at some future time I will listen to thy adventures, as patiently as thou hast listened to mine."

"I cannot promise thee so much romance, friend Democritus—for by this name I must still continue to call thee—and as for my story, 'tis little else than a history of the marchings and counter-marchings of our brave army, during the last eighteen years!"

"Eighteen years, Marcellus!" exclaimed the philosopher, opening his eyes very wide; "hast thou been eighteen years in His Majesty's service!"

"I have served almost ever since I can remember," replied St. Marcel; "indeed, I may almost say I was cradled on a drum-head! But 'tis growing late, Democritus, and I mount guard at the Palais Royal this morning at eight, so we'll defer *my* short story until we have more time to spare, and more wine to drink!"

"Agreed! agreed!" replied the philosopher; and with this, the friends shook hands, and separated for the night.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ST. LEU OBTAINS AN INTERVIEW WITH JULIE, AND ASTONISHES CORBÉ AND FATHER RIQUELET.

The objects of Jeanne's anxiety were all this time closely confined to the narrow precincts of their respective prisons: the Baron in No. One—his daughter in No. Two—and St. Leu in the *calotte* of the Bertaudiére Tower.

The shock of meeting with her lover under such distressing circumstances, threw Julie into a state of delirious fever, from which she did not recover for some days, notwithstanding the potency of Sister Bridget's medicaments, who—to render her justice—tended her charge, night and day, with a larger amount of solicitude than she was wont to manifest in general.

Although unsuspicious to an extreme degree, and far from versed in the ways of human-kind, the poor girl was not slow to conjecture that she had not only proved the indirect cause of St. Leu's incarceration, but was likewise herself the object of some sinister design; for the menacing looks and speech of the Duke de Chartres, on the morning of her examination in the Council-chamber, forcibly recurred to her memory, forming the link to a whole chain of evidence, which, though hitherto dormant, was corroborative of her most fearful suspicions.

Not the slightest doubt now remained upon her mind on the score of the identity of the strange Capuchin who abstracted the ring from

her sister's finger! he could be no other than the Duke, who, having by some fatal chance, obtained a clue to their secluded retreat, had, in order to deceive them more effectually, adopted the very disguise which St. Leu—from mere prudential reasons—assumed whenever he visited them.

Her surmises as to the Prince's motives, became disagreeable in the extreme, and her innocence took the alarm; for with the intuitive perception that virtue has of vice—she felt that his purpose was a guilty one. Willingly would she have eluded her own reflections; but in spite of all her efforts to banish them, they crowded upon her, until thought grew painful, and she could no longer bear her own imaginings: she looked forward to night as the greatest boon—for its obscurity was a safeguard—and to the approach of morn with dread, lest the succeeding day should bring her again into collision with the Duke, whom she regarded with the utmost abhorrence.

Strange to say, her only fear was of him—for she entertained no suspicion of D'Argenson, although the ostensible reason he had assigned for bringing her to the Bastile, in the first instance, namely—to interrogate her respecting the abstraction of the ring—did, on second thoughts, seem to her, rather indefinite!

And how was she indeed, in her innocence, to imagine that her abduction was the consequence of a pre-concerted plan between the Prince and D'Argenson! or, that in pretending to fall into the views of the Prince, D'Argenson intended only to dupe him, in order the more effectually to accomplish his own diabolical ends! and that, in bringing her to the Bastile, he calculated upon the strength of her attachment to her father as a means of inducing her to give up her own liberty for his! How indeed was she to divine all this?

It would, in truth seem, that the Lieutenant of Police had not chosen the most direct method of compassing the object he had in view, for he might have effected it by incarcerating her upon the authority of a *lettre-de-cachet*—a far more simple mode of operation—but he had reasons for not adopting this summary course! He could have framed a hundred pretexts for taking her to the Bastile, though not one for keeping her a prisoner there; his power was not yet so firmly established as to enable him to set aside all show of reason for his actions—as he did in after years—nor did he feel secure against the consequences of the first step he had taken to gratify his malice, until he had procured Louis' warrant for her detention. Nothing of this could Julie conjecture; hence she suspected D'Argenson less than she feared the Duke of Chartres.

It was a slight consolation, nevertheless, to find that he did not come to her in the Bastile, though her apprehensions did not diminish any the more; whilst on the part of Corbé and Father Riquelet, she became exposed to annoyances that caused her even greater alarm. Of this more anon.

But if Julie's anxiety for her lover's safety was great, his solicitude for her's increased every day, and his confinement in consequence, became daily more irksome to him.

The discovery of his operations upon the chimney had led to a strict examination of his chamber, in order to ascertain whether he had exercised his skill upon any other portion of it for the purpose of effecting a communication with the cell below; the search proved satisfactory, and Corbé, who officiated upon the occasion, made his report to the Governor accordingly. But from this time, St. Leu remarked, that Ru appeared unusually grave and taciturn, and whenever he entered the apartment, pointed expressively to the door, by jerking his thumb over his shoulder, and squeezing his lips together, as if to intimate that his prisoner must abstain from questioning him.

This silent hint, though proceeding from no apparent cause, for a time prevented St. Leu from carrying out his project of endeavouring to obtain an interview with Julie; when, one morning Ru came in somewhat earlier than customary, and having performed the various domestic offices with more than ordinary alacrity, suddenly, as he was about to depart, pushed his face towards St. Leu, and indulged in one of those extensive laughs, that vulgar custom has nick-named "a broad grin," much to the astonishment of the captive, and evidently much to his own gratification, pointing to the door the whole time, and shaking his head very significantly.

"He isn't come this morning," said he, as soon as he could compel his jaws to resume their natural position.

"Who is not come?" asked St. Leu, more for the purpose of drawing his jailer into conversation than from a wish to be enlightened.

"The sentinel!" answered Ru; "Corbé suspected me, so he sent him up to listen;" and he here indulged in another fit of laughter, long and violent enough to have induced apoplexy; "I'm glad you understood my signs," added he, "or else we should have been found out."

"What in, friend?" asked St. Leu again, not exactly comprehending him.

"'Tis against orders to speak to a prisoner," answered Ru, in a subdued tone; "but 'tis very hard to keep one's mouth always shut; is'nt it?" In proof of which assertion the same broad grin for the third time graced his visage.

St. Leu, perceiving that his jailer was in a happy mood, thought the opportunity favourable for carrying his long meditated plan into execution:

"Friend Ru," said he, withdrawing Julie's miniature from his breast, and pointing to the case of massive gold by which it was protected; "dost thou see this gold?"

Ru looked first at it, and then at him with glistening eyes, and extended mouth, but neither said he *did* see the proffered bribe, nor that he did not; indeed, his conscience was so tender, that had the giver positively insisted upon it, he would have closed his eyes, and conveyed the gold into his pocket, to save his veracity. As it was, he remained silent for a moment or two, but at length muttered, shaking his head and pointing downwards with his keys:

"She's been very ill, but she's better now!"

St. Leu turned pale; his imagination all at once grew pregnant with melancholy forebodings, that he tried in vain to stifle; he knew that without the man's connivance it would be impossible to gain admittance to her, and yet, hesitated to tender him the bribe, lest, having accepted it, he should refuse to fulfil his part of the conditions:

"The gold," said he, endeavouring to excite his cupidity; "is worth twenty *louis*."

"Is it!" observed Ru musingly.

"If thou wilt only admit me to the cell in which this young lady is confined, thou shalt have it all."

"Shall I!" ejaculated the sententious *porte-clefs*.

"Every atom of it," resumed St. Leu; "and had I more, I would give it thee."

"Would you!" said Ru again.

"Nay!" remonstrated the young man; "can'st thou do what I ask?"

Ru shook his keys, winked his eye, and answered that he thought he could!

"Well, then, friend Ru, wilt thou admit me to her?"

"I must think about it," retorted the latter; "'tis dangerous! if the old one"—meaning the Governor—"found me out, I should be hanged! very agreable, eh! all to oblige you!"

"But I will not betray thee!"—observed St. Leu; "depend upon it I will not."

"You shouldn't do it twice," muttered Ru, nodding his head, menacingly: "You're sure you wouldn't try to escape, eh?"

"On my honour," replied St. Leu, "I will not."

"It wouldn't be of much use if you did," retorted the man, laughing at his own facetiousness; "that's one consolation."

"Let me know at once," exclaimed his prisoner, striving to conceal his disgust, "whether you will accede to my request or not. Take what precautions you choose to prevent my attempting to escape, only let me behold my beloved Julie once again!"

"Give me the gold," exclaimed Ru, holding out his hand.

"But what guarantee have I that you will not deceive me," observed St. Leu, hesitatingly.

Ru made no reply, but looking at him steadfastly, for a moment or two, with an expression of countenance difficult to define, turned on his heel, and abruptly quitted the cell, leaving him completely mystified.

The whole day passed without this extraordinary individual reappearing, and more than once St. Leu repented of his distrust, fearing that he had thereby lost the chance of securing the man's cooperation. Long after his usual hour, however, Ru brought him his evening meal, maintaining the strictest silence whilst he arranged it on the table. But St. Leu, desirous of conciliating him, now tendered him the gold, which he had detached from the miniature since the morning, saying:

"Friend Ru, I fear I was mistaken in thy character—"

"Perhaps," observed he, interrupting him.

"Here!" continued St. Leu; "I will confide in thy honour to assist me in the accomplishment of my wishes; there is the gold."

The man took the lump of precious metal, and weighed it in his hand, regarding it all the while with great complacency, alternately looking at the donor; he then deposited it in his pocket, and disappeared without offering any further remark.

St. Leu was even more mystified and perplexed than before, but knowing that his only alternative was patience, sat down to his meal; revolving in his mind the practicability of obtaining his end by force, should the means fail that he had adopted.

Some two hours after, whilst deeply absorbed in these unpleasant meditations, he was astonished by the re-appearance of Ru, who, stalking stealthily, into the middle of the chamber, said in a half whisper:

"She's all alone! Sister Bridget—" here he uttered a sigh that sounded as though he were labouring under an attack of the hooping-cough—"and I, have made it up between us."

The announcement was so unexpected, that St. Leu could hardly credit the truth of it; his doubts, however, were soon dispelled by the *porte cléfs*, who noticing his emotion, continued:

"'Tis all right! You can stop with her till we come back! You'll hear me shut the outer door of the tower; then you may go down."

"But which is her cell?" asked St. Leu, as Ru was on the point of departing; "thou hast not told me."

"On the second landing from this," replied the other; I've left the door ajar. You needn't be afraid of visiters," he added, with a chuckle, "very few of *them*; eh?" and again he laughed, till his cheeks grew purple, and withdrew from the cell, leaving both doors open.

St. Leu listened to his receding footsteps with the intensest anxiety; his heart throbbed more and more violently as each step grew more indistinct, and when he heard the tower-door slam to, he almost dropped from excess of excitement. Still, his prudence did not forsake him; he could not know that Ru meditated no treachery, and an instinct of self-preservation, led him to arm himself with the iron-bar he had wrenched from the chimney, lest he should find himself betrayed: concealing it beneath his coat, he tremblingly advanced towards the door, and listened; all was still! Step by step he groped his way down the dark stairs to the first landing; his hand rested on the iron-door of the cell immediatety beneath his own—the same from which every night issued the plaintive music. How he longed to speak to the unhappy prisoner! But no! only a few steps more separated him from his beloved Julie. He reached the second landing, and paused ere he broke in upon her. The outer door yielded to his hand, and now the inner one! What bolts and bars, and heavy locks, and thick doors, and massive walls to enclose so frail a flower!

So quietly had he glided in, that he almost touched her ere she became aware of his presence!

She saw him, but could not believe it was he! she was terror-stricken, and unable to speak, or scream, or stir! she sat, riveted to her seat, gazing upon him, as though some apparition had suddenly burst upon her sight! but it was only for a moment! the next instant they were clasped to each other's bosom, both shedding tears of joy.

"Oh! Leon! dear Leon," said she, as soon as she could speak; "how did'st thou gain admission to me, here? 'Tis thou thyself, and no dream!"

"I knew not, dearest," answered he, "that I was coming, until just now: I bribed Ru to connive at our meeting, otherwise I fear my efforts to arrive at thee must have failed. But tell me; why art thou here—in this horrid den?"

"Oh Leon! we have been in great trouble since we saw thee last, but I fear 'twould be too long to tell thee all! Thank Heaven, I once more hear thy voice! 'tis indeed my own dear Leon! Why! why did'st thou write me such a cruel letter? How could'st thou believe me false to my vows? Oh Leon! how unhappy hast thou made me!"

"Forgive me, my Julie! I have suffered much also since my last interview with thee at thy father's house! I thought thee false at first—but I had reason! see! this ring!"

At the sight of the primitive cause of all her misfortunes, the maiden burst into a flood of tears:

"Thou hast it again, then!" said she, "oh Leon had'st thou known how that token was stolen from us, thou would'st never have accused me of falseness to thee. Give it to me back, Leon! it shall never again leave me."

Kissing her snowy forehead, St. Leu took the extended hand, and pressing it in his own, placed the ring upon the betrothal-finger, saying:

"All is forgiven, sweet Julie! 'tis I have been in the wrong! But tell me I beseech thee the history of thy misfortunes."

Julie, succinctly recounted the whole adventure of the ring, and its consequences, bringing her narrative up to that moment, and ended by placing in his hands the letters she had only that day received from Jeanne, including the one that he had addressed to her and forwarded through St. Marcel.

"Is it possible," he exclaimed, as she came to a close, "that my protector, Monsieur D'Orleans, can have lent himself to encompass thy destruction! How can I leave thee thus, unprotected."

She laid a hand upon his arm, and turning her beautiful eyes, swimming in tears, full upon him, said, with an angelic look of resignation:

"I am not unprotected, Leon! My Father above is my protector; he will bring me harmless through this trial, or take me to his bosom! I have prayed for death, Leon, but, since I have again seen thee—I—I—feel I could not die so happy! Oh! why did'st thou come?"

St. Leu was too much affected to reply; his own tears, which now fell fast, mingled with her's, and thus they remained for some time, holding each other by the hand, and gazing into each other's eyes with that mute eloquence which belongs so exclusively to kindred hearts. At length, Julie once more broke silence:

"And thou, Leon; how camest thou here? tell me all."

Her lover in turn related the occurrences that had caused the duel between him and St. Marcel, and the mode of his arrest and incarceration in the Bastile—only interrupting himself, now and then, to wipe away the fresh tears that fell from her eyes;

"And now, my sweet Julie," said he, terminating his brief narrative "dost thou forgive me? We have both been the dupes of fate, but to-morrow shall not pass without my making an effort to regain our liberty. Poor Jeanne! thy poor father too! Yet, let us not despair! We shall yet escape!"

"With Heaven to guide us, Leon! for Heaven alone can save us! Let us kneel to our Great Father, and ask his assistance!"

Leaning upon her lover's bosom she wept abundantly, and sinking upon her knees, directing her eyes upwards, remained a few moments absorbed in silent prayer! nor could St. Leu abstain from imitating her example: they arose, strengthened in mind, and once more embraced each other.

"I will take this letter of thy sister's, Julie," said St. Leu, conveying it into his pocket—"as for this one, which I wrote to thee, let it perish!" and he cast it into the fire.

At this moment, a slight noise was heard below, as of the opening of the outer door of the tower, and immediately after, the echo of footsteps ascending the stairs.

"Gracious Heaven!" ejaculated Julie, with affright, "we are discovered! Leon! Leon! conceal thyself! 'tis not Ru's footstep! Thou art lost if they perceive thee here!"

St. Leu reluctantly retreated behind the long serge curtains of her bed, which stood in a dark angle of the dreary apartment, and there awaited the arrival of the stranger, whilst Julie, pale as a corpse, stood gazing in the direction of the door, trembling violently from head to foot.

A moment of suspense, the door was thrust open, and Corbé appeared.

"How's this!" he exclaimed, looking suspiciously about him; "does Bridget leave a prisoner's door open!"

"There's no fear, Monsieur," replied Julie, stammering, and attempting to smile; "no fear, Monsieur, of my escaping! Sister Bridget knows that!"

"Yes," muttered the Lieutenant-Governor, closing the door; "or she would'nt leave thee here alone!"

Julie trembled to see him draw near to her; his looks affrighted her, and she shrunk from him to the further side of the chamber, drawing as near as she could to the spot where St. Leu was hidden.

"Am I so disagreeable to thee, fair Julie," said the wretch, advancing towards her.

"Oh, Monsieur!" she exclaimed; "'tis very late, and I wish to retire; Sister Bridget will be here presently."

Corbé shook his head, and answered:

"No! no! Sister Bridget and Ru are too busy talking over their own concerns to mind thee! I am not afraid of interruption from them! Allow me to conduct thee to a chair."

Julie unwillingly permitted him to take her hand, and lead her to a seat; placing himself by her side, and still retaining possession of her hand, which she in vain attempted to withdraw, he approached his head to her's, and staring intently into her face, said:

"I have long sought an opportunity, fair girl, of—"

Julie shrieked aloud, for her eye caught the figure of St. Leu who had partially advanced from his hiding-place, in a threatening attitude towards the Lieutenant-Governor; whilst the latter, unable to guess the cause of her sudden emotion, started up, and looked about the apartment expecting to elucidate the mystery: as, however, St. Leu had already retreated, he saw nothing; attributing her trepidation solely to his advances, he re-seated himself, and was about commencing a second speech, when he again started up, for once more the sound of approaching footsteps became audible.

Julie heard them likewise, and hoped it was either Ru or Sister Bridget; but Corbé's ears were quick in recognizing the step; he looked about, right and left, in a hurried, confused manner, and as the sounds became more distinct, rushed to the very spot where St. Leu had concealed himself, and would infallibly have discovered him, had not Julie, with great presence of mind, placed herself in his way, and compelled him to seek refuge on the other side of the bed, so that only the drapery separated him from St. Leu.

He had scarcely withdrawn behind it—and Julie had not regained her composure—when Father Riquelet entered.

His face was flushed, and his eyes shone from the effects of wine; his gait was unsteady, but he still maintained his usual sleek aspect, and the same meek smile played upon his lips that characterized him in general: carefully closing the door, he drew near to Julie, and perceiving that she had sunken into a chair, dragged a second close up to her, and closing the palms of his hands, said, with a thickness of articulation that he could not conceal:

"Do not alarm thyself, my child! I am come to pass a few moments in thy company; perceiving sister Bridget and Ru together in earnest conversation, I conjectured thou wert alone."

"I—I, ought to—to be much obliged to you, father," stammered Julie, almost unconscious of what she was saying; "but—I—I—was not—that is—I—did not expect to see you at this late hour."

The Jesuit very slowly drew his chair still nearer to her's, and taking one of her hands, pressed it between his:

"Thou art flurried, my sweet child," said he, gazing into her eyes; "let not my presence alarm thee—"

"Oh, father," ejaculated the affrighted maiden, "loose my hand, I beseech you!"

"Nay, innocent," continued he, forcibly retaining her hand, and allowing his eyes to wander over her snowy neck and heaving bosom; "I am thy friend; I came to warn thee of a danger—"

"I beseech you," cried the terrified girl, "choose some other time."

"Perhaps, my sweet child, it would be then too late:" he here approached his lips to her cheek, whispering:—"Corbé—thou knowest Corbé—he is not to be trusted—he has sworn thy ruin."

"For the love of Heaven, father," ejaculated Julie, bursting into tears, "leave my apartment; I will hear any thing you have to say, to-morrow—but it is late—very late—leave me, I beg—"

"Nay, beautiful girl," answered he, placing an arm round her waist, "I will not leave thee—we are here alone—quite alone."

"Loose me, I implore you," cried Julie, struggling to release herself from his tightened grasp—or I will scream for assistance—nay, I beseech you, Sir, unhand me,"

"Thy struggles—thy screams will not avail thee, foolish girl," replied he, attempting to embrace her; "no one is near to hear thee—we are alone."

The words had scarcely crossed his lips, than Julie uttered a loud shriek, and at the same moment a heavy blow on the back of the head, felled him like an ox to the ground, upon which he rolled full-length, and insensible.

"Wretch!" cried St. Leu, brandishing his iron-bar over the prostrate man, "is it thus thou disgracest thy holy calling! Where is thy rival in guilt! where is he! that I may strike him to the earth likewise."

But Corbé no sooner beheld St. Leu rush, armed, from behind the drapery, than fearing a similar visitation upon his own head, he effected, unperceived, a precipitate retreat, whilst Julie fled into her lover's arms for protection, terrified in the extreme lest he should have killed Riquelet.

At this critical juncture, Sister Bridget and Ru made their appearance, great was their alarm on perceiving how matters stood; the latter having, however, ascertained that the Jesuit was not seriously injured, shook his head very sorrowfully, and assisting him to rise, conducted him to the outer door, where he left him, to return to his prisoners.

St. Leu on an intimation from the *porte-clefs*, tore himself from Julie with an aching heart, and leaving her to the care of Sister Bridget, once more regained his solitary dungeon.

"Only stunned!" said Ru to him, chuckling with savage merriment; "why did'nt you kill him! *I* would! both of 'em! if I had had such a chance!"

St. Leu shuddered, making him a sign to withdraw; the man obeyed, and for the first time since his incarceration, St. Leu found consolation in solitude

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE DARK CHAMBER IN THE BASTILE.

UNCONTROLLABLE as was D'Argenson's rage on discovering the trick Jacques had played off upon the Superior of the Convent, he could not but acknowledge that her credulity was only a necessary consequence of the confidence she knew him to have hitherto reposed in the same extraordinary individual, although his invectives were not the less loud or violent against the matron, for suffering herself to be so easily deceived: but having vented his anger in a series of the most horrible execrations, he abruptly quitted the holy mansion, vowing vengeance—dire and immediate—against the bold spy.

His first step was to apprize his partner in guilt—the Duke de Chartres—of the occurrence, leading him to suppose that their intended victim had been abducted from her own residence only on that same day, for he durst not make him acquainted with the truth, fearing thereby to betray his own treachery, and also lest that the Duke—incensed at being duped—should suddenly declare himself the champion of the oppressed party; an event which the instability of his disposition rendered nowise unlikely, and his influence at court, nowise desirable. Similar prudential reasons led him to keep likewise secret the name of the maiden's abductor, and his identity with the intruder who had the night before disturbed the party assembled in the pavilion; since he could not confess his knowledge of the man's guilt without in some measure implicating his own self, or placing it in the Duke's power to tax him with privity to the act—Jacques being his acknowledged agent.

D'Orleans received the announcement with as much unconcern as he could muster for the occasion, in the face of his flagrant suspicions of D'Argenson's sincerity, and although extremely mortified, listened in silence to the latter's recital until he brought it to a close—a circumstance that did not escape the penetration of the Lieutenant of Police, nor failed to excite his surprise—for, aware of the Prince's impetuous temper, he expected to be overwhelmed with the bitterest sarcasms and reproaches, and had in fact come prepared to receive them; finding however that he did not press him with questions, he hastened away, quitting the dissipated scion of royalty with many assurances—and in these he was, for once, sincere—that he would leave no stone unturned to discover and punish the individual who had stepped in so inopportunely between them and their design.

In earnest of this resolution, he forthwith commenced operations to track the spy, but in spite of his vigilance and of that of his emissaries, failed to discover the slightest clue to his hiding-place. Yet, he was met at almost all hours—and almost every where—indeed, according to the reports of the men set to apprehend him, he must have possessed the faculty of multiplying himself to an extraordinary extent, for it was asserted he had been seen by a dozen different persons, in as many different places, and all at the same time, though he had

always disappeared, in the most unaccountable manner, at the very moment his capture appeared most imminent. In vain the wary Lieutenant of Police sought to solve the mystery of this strange man's existence; his utmost penetration was completely at fault, and himself baffled at every new view he took of the case. Had he known of the secret community of the Lutetians, he would have been less perplexed to conjecture how every movement of his own should be marked and forestalled, whilst he remained totally unable to obtain the remotest clue to the man of whom he was in quest: however, the disappointments he daily experienced, though they mortified him, served only to whet his desire of vengeance, and as so many fresh incentives to greater vigilance; having resolved upon his ruin, he knew that the means at his command rendered the spy's ultimate escape next to impossible.

Some days had already elapsed since his interview with the Duke de Chartres, and during this interval—apart from his numerous magisterial duties, which engrossed nearly the whole of his time—he brooded over and matured his plans of vengeance against the Baron; these were now about to assume a more determined character—for hitherto he had carried out his systematic persecution of this unfortunate and unoffending nobleman, under a variety of frivolous pretexts to which his great influence had indeed enabled him to give a legal colouring, but which served, merely as a cloak to his real motives; and it may be as well to relate here, the origin of the violent hatred whence they sprung.

About thirty years before the opening of this tale, the young Chevalier D'Argenson—appointed to fulfil an inferior station in the government of the Duchy of Angoulême, which his family influence with the ministry, had succeeded in obtaining for him—became a frequent guest at the *châteaux* of the several noblemen and the landed proprietors of the province, into connexion with whom he was necessarily brought in the discharge of his official duties. Amongst the number, figured the Baron de St. Auney, for whose only sister, the youthful Constance, he soon conceived a violent passion, and sought, by every means in his power, to ingratiate himself into her favour, thrusting himself into her society, at every opportunity, until his attentions received a check from the young lady herself, who openly expressed her dislike of him. In no wise discouraged, however, he still continued his assiduities, and according to the established usage of the country, intimated to the Baron—her brother, and her only surviving relative—his desire to be received as her suitor. The Baron politely, but resolutely declined his suit, on the ostensible plea of the maiden's extreme youth—she being scarcely sixteen—but in reality, because he was fully aware of her aversion, and himself entertained a similar repugnance to the proposed alliance, on account of the profligate habits of the Chevalier, and of his evil disposition, which, even at that early period, had already gained him a most unenviable notoriety: the Chevalier bowed, and withdrew; dissatisfied, but not deterred.

Within a twelvemonth after, he presented himself a second time, and urged his former request with renewed warmth, when he re-

ceived the unwelcome intelligence of the maiden being betrothed to the Count de St Angin—the Baron's neighbour—who although sixteen years her senior, had succeeded in gaining her affections, and on this occasion De St. Auney intimated to the disappointed suitor, that his visits to the *château* must thenceforth be discontinued, except when business called him thither. At this, his anger knew no bounds: he raved, stamped, and swore the bitterest oaths, vowing to be revenged upon his more fortunate rival, the Count de St. Angin, and upon the Baron, as the chief promoter of the hated union; with this he departed, nor were the objects of his malice long ere they perceived that he was an enemy to be dreaded, and whom no conciliations could cause to relent.

The influence of the Count, however, enabled him to counteract, in a great measure, the machinations of the vengeful Chevalier, who found himself compelled to devour his spleen in secret, or at least to confine his persecutions to those petty vexations which his malice suggested whenever his duties placed him in relation either with the Count or with his brother-in-law the Baron. About four years after the marriage of the former with the fair Constance de St. Auney, their happiness was crowned by the birth of a son, but the joyful event was followed, within two months, by the sudden demise of the young mother—a calamity which plunged the whole family into the deepest grief, leaving the disconsolate husband so depressed with anguish, that change of scene was prescribed as the only means of diverting his mind from the contemplation of his misfortune. Previously to his departure, he drew up a will, bequeathing the bulk of his property to his infant son, whose uncle, the Baron de St. Auney, he constituted his guardian, and confiding the child to it's foster-mother—the wife of one of his tenants—quitted the scene of his former domestic felicity, with the intention of journeying into Switzerland by way of Paris and Bésançon; the final settlement of his affairs calling him to the first mentioned city. But a strange fatality attached itself to his footsteps; he had scarcely reached the metropolis, than he suddenly fell ill of an epidemic fever then prevalent there, and died four days after his arrival; his only companion —a trusty servant—likewise caught the infection, and within two days of the death of his master, followed him to the grave.

This fatal calamity was a severe shock to the Baron, happening as it did, within so short a time after the melancholy demise of his sister, but his anguish was not to be restrained, when—as related in a former chapter—the Count's infant son disappeared, and whose fate, in spite of the efforts made to discover a clue to it, remained involved in mystery.

In the interim, D'Argenson had been elevated to the Bailiwick of Angoulême,* and being now invested with almost arbitrary power, re-commenced his oppression of the Baron upon a more extensive scale. The death of the young Constance de St. Angin, had filled him with savage joy, which received hardly any augmentation when the news of the Count's death, reached him at Tours, where he re-

* A post corresponding to that of Lord Lieutenant of a county in England.

sided at the time; we have already shown the conduct he observed towards the Baron, subsequently to the disappearance of the heir to the D'Angin estates, his hatred towards whose late possessor almost justified the suspicion of his having compassed the child's abduction.

Upon the Baron alone, now fell the entire weight of D'Argenson's persecution, which seemed to increase in malignity, as years rolled on, and as his power received extension; and having, by protracted and vexatory law-suits, at length succeeded in involving him in pecuniary difficulties, that, without breaking his trust, De St. Auney was incapable of extricating himself from—a climax be it said, which D'Argenson, now Lieutenant of Police, had long sought to bring about—the mortification of the latter may be conceived upon discovering by whose instrumentality his victim had been placed in a position to obey the peremptory mandate of the Supreme Court. Still, untoward as was this event—so contrary to any thing he anticipated—he devised means of wresting it to the furtherance of his own schemes, and to the destruction of the unfortunate Baron, and the first act towards the accomplishment of the deep plot his cunning had engendered, was the procuring of the king's warrant for the latter's detention upon suspicion of his complicity to the forgery of the bond which Jacques tendered to Etienne Quinault as security for the hundred thousand crowns, and that St Marcel signed—as will be remembered—under a fictitious name.

It seemed too, as though fate favoured him in the consummation of his malicious projects in affording him the opportunity of entrapping the Baron, on the night of their meeting in the Cemetery of the St. Innocents; but this act was not the result of premeditation—the thought suggested itself only with the occasion, and was followed up without his having then any definite object in view beyond the gratification arising from a wanton exercise of his great power upon the object of his hatred: since that time, however, his brain had hatched deeper mischief, for he now sought—although convinced of his innocence—to prove the Baron guilty of the crime he had alleged against him, no difficult matter considering the means at his command—which diabolical end once attained, the unfortunate nobleman's life, or what might be considered its equivalent—his liberty during the remainder of his days—would be in his keeping, and his triumph over him complete.

But the hatred of the Lieutenant of Police had fastened, not on the Baron alone, but his daughters likewise, though under another form; and if, holding them as he did, so completely at his mercy—more especially Julie, the innocent, the confiding Julie—he had hitherto hesitated to accomplish their destruction, the circumstance was attributable less to any twinge of conscience—a commodity he did not deal in—than to his habitual craftiness, which, rendering him fully alive to every adverse chance, shewed him the policy of not neglecting due precautions to screen himself against the consequences to be apprehended from a discovery of his evil machinations.

Having determined upon his plan of operations, and chosen a con

venient morning to pay a visit to the Bastile—ostensibly on an official errand—he set out for the grim structure, after providing himself with certain documents which he anticipated would be called into requisition, and which—since the truth must be told—he had prepared expressly for the occasion.

He repaired thither without any previous announcement of his intention — his usual custom — preferring always when practicable —to drop in upon the authorities, unawares, as he thereby often arrived at the knowledge of sundry delicate secrets, connected with the discharge of their respective duties, of which he would—under other circumstances—have remained in ignorance; besides which, his appearance amongst them at such critical periods, never failed to throw the parties into a state of extraordinary confusion and embarrassment that greatly heightened the pleasure he derived from a consciousness of his own importance.

On the morning in question, upon reaching the door of the Council-chamber, which he found a little way open—he heard three or four voices in angry altercation, an incident that naturally enough prompted him to listen to what was going forward, and then to burst suddenly in upon the contending parties: these were Corbé, Riquelet, and Ru; the two former in a defensive attitude, and the latter—whose face was very red, and who was looking very fiercely at the other two—standing with his head pushed forward towards them, one hand clenched, and the other grasping very tightly, his huge bunch of keys, which he occasionally flourished over his head, bringing it every time so close to that of his adversaries as to render his proximity to them at that particular moment, any thing but agreeable; as the expression of their countenance plainly indicated.

"Never mind me! never mind me! *sang-dieu!*" exclaimed D'Argenson, on perceiving that his entry had occasioned a cessation of hostilities; "go on! go on! keep it up! I'm nobody! never mind me!"

"I don't," ejaculated Ru, doggedly; "and I don't mind *them* either! nor yet the old one—nor yet any body; I don't! What's the good of it?"

"I will explain every thing, Monseigneur," stammered Corbé, casting a side glance at Father Riquelet, who had suddenly assumed his favorite attitude, and with down-turned eyes and closed palms, now looked a pattern of earthly humility; "'tis nothing, Monseigneur; nothing, I assure you!"

"It looks like it; *morbleu!*" said the Lieutenant, pointedly; "what is it all about?"

"Don't listen to *them*," cried Ru, pointing with his keys to Corbé and the Jesuit; "*they*'ll tell all kinds of lies, *they* will! I *know* 'em!"

"Speak! one of you, or all of you!" shouted D'Argenson, in a voice of thunder! "I don't want to hear recriminations! To the point!"

"Why; I told 'em I'd murder 'em some day," retorted Ru, with great placidity; "that's all! and so I will; if they provoke me to it!"

"But thou art drunk, Ru," observed Corbé, in his most conciliatory and persuasive manner; "thou wert only joking! He does not mean what he says, Monseigneur!"

"Don't I!" muttered the *porte-clefs*, with a delightful frown; "don't you provoke me! that's all!"

"Go on! go on! never mind me!" vociferated D'Argenson, rubbing his hands, apparently transported beyond measure with this little display of private feeling—"keep it up! never mind me! *sang-dieu!*"

"He has been drinking this morning, Monseigneur;" again chimed in Corbé; "'tis not worth while to trouble you with a recital of his extravagancies."

"Isn't it!" reiterated Ru, with a knowing nod, at the same time edging nearer to D'Argenson; "I buy wine at five sous a bottle, and charge government, thirty, I do! don't I? Perhaps you'll say I put it into Monsieur St. Marc's head to do that—eh?* I've got a good memory, I have, but I can't remember *that!* I can recollect the young girl though, who was confined in the Bertaudière, No. One, about ten years ago, I can; and so can you—and so can that old hypocrite yonder—" here he pointed to Riquelet who still maintained his contrite air and humble attitude—"but if you can't, either of you," continued Ru, sneeringly, his eyes glowing with anger and malice, "if you can't, I say, I'll rub up my memory a little, and perhaps I shall be able to give you a bit more of what it's been saving up so long! You thought to frighten me, did you? You thought I cared about your telling the old one that I took a piece of gold from the *calotte*—" the *porte-clefs* alluded to St. Leu—"but you wouldn't have told him why you sneaked into No. Two's cell, both of you, only the night before last! You thought I was going to let you mal-treat *her* too, did you? and say nothing about it, eh? And I was to get Sister Bridget out of the way, wasn't I? And because I refused, you threatened to get me locked up in the dungeon of the ditch, did you? But I found you out, I did! Only let me get *you* there—either of you; or both—that's all! I'll bring you your victuals regularly, I will! And you shall have the best of every thing, you shall! And clean straw when the other's rotten! And nice fresh water to drink when you ask for it! Oh yes! Ah! ah! ah! ah! I owe you a grudge, I do—and I should like to pay you out—I should!"

Ru had by this time wrought himself into a fury, and laughed outright, with savage joy, as he enumerated the various advantages the parties in question were to derive from his guardianship, should circumstances ever so favour them as to place them under it, whilst they stood cowed and trembling to hear him make these disclosures before the Lieutenant of Police, who was not slow to appreciate the amount of credence due to the same.

"Pretty doings, *tonnerre dieu!* pretty goings on!" said he, taking

* Besides the allowance made to him by Government, for the maintenance of the prisoners, the Governor of the Bastile enjoyed the privilege of receiving annually into his cellar, free of the *octroi*, or city dues, a hundred hogsheads (*pièces*) of wine. St. Marc, in order to swell his profits—already very enormous—was the first who sold this privilege. It was purchased of him by a wine shop keeper, (*marchand de vins*) of Paris, named Bouhin, for the sum of 10,000 *livres* (about £360 sterling) and as many hogsheads of the most inferior kind of wine as sufficed for the annual consumption of the prisoners: it may be added—by way of comment—that this infamous bargain was immensely to the disadvantage of the latter.

advantage of a pause; "but mark me," continued he, speaking to Corbé and Riquelet—"harm that young thing at your peril! touch but a hair of her head, and your lives shall answer for it! By St. Marc I swear it! As for thee, Maitre Ru, learn to speak of thy superiors with becoming respect, or perhaps thou may'st make acquaintance with the *cachot; mort dieu!*"

"Ah! ah! ah!" cried Ru, staring full into the Lieutenant's face.

"What!" said the latter; "dost thou laugh?"

"Why not?" re-echoed the facetious *porte-clefs*; "it's such a good joke! ah! ah! ah! I've been *porte-clefs* more than five and twenty years, and you all think I am frightened of the dungeon! ah! ah! ah! Don't you think being shut up here so long is as bad? I do!"

"We may feel inclined, some day, to put thee to the proof, Maitre Ru," observed D'Argenson gloomily.

"Do!" answered the former, with a most imperturbable countenance; "I should rather like it! it would be quite a change! ah! ah! ah! Who'd you get to do my work; eh? Your's is a good joke, Monseigneur! ah! ah! ah! ah!" and Ru, unable longer to contain himself, vented his humour in a long and violent fit of laughter, slapping his thigh with every symptom of ecstasy, and indulging in a variety of contortions peculiar to himself when in a happy mood.

Corbé and Father Riquelet were petrified to witness the small amount of respect he paid to the Lieutenant of Police, expecting every moment to receive a command from the latter for the confinement of Ru; but in this they were disappointed.

Fortunately for the individual in question, the frame of mind in which he happened to be, suited the nature of the business that brought D'Argenson that morning to the Bastile, otherwise his facetious defiance of the authorities might have terminated unpleasantly; the Lieutenant of Police, however, appeared inclined rather to accommodate himself to the *porte-clefs'* humour than oppose it, a circumstance that failed not to excite the wonderment of Corbé and his companion, who, mute and confused, awaited the issue of this extraordinary scene in the greatest anxiety: at length—Ru having expended his vein of mirth—D'Argenson abruptly inquired after the Governor.

"He is not stirring yet, Monseigneur," replied Father Riquelet, looking up and speaking for the first time; "he has not been well these last few days."

"Let him know I am here," exclaimed D'Argenson, "and tell him to re-join us in the dark chamber;" upon which the Jesuit bowed and withdrew, Ru threatening him with his keys as he stepped past him on his way out.

"Lead the way, Corbé," continued the Lieutenant of Police, speaking to that individual; "and do thou follow us, Maitre Ru; there'll be work for thee!"

"There's the key," said the latter, detaching it from the bunch at his side, and throwing it at Corbé; "is it for *him?*" continued he to D'Argenson, in a whisper, casting his eyes towards the receding figure of the Lieutenant-Governor.

"No," responded D'Argenson in the same confidential tone: "but

keep a sharp look out upon him, and let me know if he attempts any thing of this sort again! Here! take this! obey my commands, and I will befriend thee."

"It's heavy!" observed the *porte-clefs* to himself, taking the proffered purse, which contained a good sum in gold; "that'll do, Monseigneur," continued he; "you may depend upon me! Corbé spited me once—it's a long time ago—but I have'n't forgotten it! ah! ah! ah! A good joke, their threatening to put me down in the ditch; is'n't it? ah! ah! ah! ah! Come this way, Monseigneur."

Preceding the Lieutenant of Police, he led the way across the great inner court to the door of the Tower of the Treasure—which they found open—here they turned short round to their left, and passing through a second door, likewise open ready to admit them, went along a short passage ending at a third door, and opening into a sombre apartment situated between the above-mentioned tower and that of the chapel: they were in the dark chamber.

It had been constructed by the blocking up of the two archways that formed the ancient entry into Paris, situated between the two parent towers of this dismal edifice,* so that the floor was on the same level as the court outside, only unpaved. Seen from any part of the interior, it looked like the half section of a huge barrel with the circular side uppermost for the roof. It had no other door but the small one that it was entered by, and was entirely devoid of windows or aperture for light; at one end—that nearest the bastion—the inner side of the arch had been closed by simply dropping the portcullis, which, bristling with grim teeth of iron, might now be seen half buried in the earth; facing it, at the opposite end, was a dark recess, formed by the inner gateway, and filled with a strange assortment of miscellaneous articles—broken swords, rusty helmets, spear-heads, halberts—some entire, some snapped short off—a lot of musketoons, dismounted guns, broken wheels, pieces of iron, beams of wood, cavalry boots with their spurs strapped to them, a horse-soldier's saddle, with a variety of other objects thrown together in a heap; on one side of the recess, stood a wooden post having a number of leathern thongs depending therefrom, and on the other a large cage made of solid beam plated with iron, of a conical shape at the top, and of such peculiar construction, that the unfortunate individual, whoever he might be, that was confined within its narrow limits—for it was intended for the reception of human victims—could neither stand upright in it, nor lie down, nor kneel, but was compelled to maintain a crouching posture, without the means of easing his cramped limbs. Across the chamber, in its width, a massive beam extended from wall to wall, studded with several large tenter-hooks placed at irregular distances, and near the portcullis stood a windlass fixed into the masonry, round the barrel of which lay coiled a quantity of strong cord; close to it, figured a row of iron weights and a steel-yard, some half dozen leathern buckets, sundry funnels, and a curiously fashioned iron boot furnished with slides and screws: a little further on, lay several large lumps of lead, a plumber's ladle

* *Vide Plate and Description of the Bastile; Part II. Chapter IV.*

filled with the same metal, and by its side, an overturned furnace; saws of all sizes, stained and rusted, hung suspended against the wall, with hammers and nails strewed about, a pair of pincers, and a case of surgical instruments covered with dust. Immediately to the left, on entering, mortised into the wall, was a long narrow table, very much discoloured, and a low wooden bench reaching from the head to the foot of it, a tall chair being placed at the upper end; on it, stood the lamp Corbé had brought with him, casting a dim red glare in a narrow circle immediately around itself, and leaving the rest of the den only one remove from total obscurity: the aspect of the place was horrific in the extreme, and the stench most abominable, the means of ventilation having been entirely forgotten, or omitted.*

On an intimation to that effect from D'Argenson, Ru lighted the stump of a torch that laid in one corner, and fixed it into the wall by means of an iron spike, an operation that afforded him an opportunity of exercising his ingenuity, and of manifesting his delight when it was completed.

D'Argenson meanwhile appeared very deeply interested in the examination of the various implements mentioned, handling some, turning over others with his foot, and now and then running his thumb along the edge of the sharper instruments, with a view to ascertain their condition; he lifted up the weights too, one after the other, eyeing the tenter hooks all the time, and mentally resolving the probable number it would take of the former to disjoint or to dislocate his own limbs, whilst Ru, emulous of excelling him, slily exhibited his dexterity by seizing two of the heaviest in each hand, and after whirling them once or twice over his head with considerable velocity, casting them so near to Corbé as to place that individual's personal safety in imminent jeopardy, causing him to leap out of the way of the falling missiles with more agility than he was wont in his general movements to display.

At this moment St. Marc entered, closely followed by Father Riquelet, the former of whom D'Argenson advanced to meet, greeting him with the customary morning salutations, which were returned by the other with due obsequiousness.

The persons assembled were totally at a loss to divine the object of the Lieutenant's visit, although indistinctly aware that it was connected with the fate of one of the prisoners, and looked at one another with that vacant stare that always accompanies expectancy; their surmises were, however, soon set at rest by D'Argenson.

"Bring hither No. One of the Bertaudière," said he, addressing Corbé, "let him be guarded, and let me have ink and a pen."

Whilst Corbé departed to fulfil his mission, D'Argenson took up his position at the head of the long table, St. Marc seating himself on the low bench, and Riquelet standing behind him; Ru remained near

* Some years after, on the accession of Monsieur de Sartignes to the office of Lieutenant of Police, this dark chamber was cleared out, and the instruments of torture either destroyed or sold, none of them having been found in 1789 when the Bastile was taken: cells were then constructed on its site, and apertures for light and air made in the masonry. *(Vide Part II. Chapter IV.)*

the windlass, gazing abstractedly at his feet, and at their upward continuations.

The silence that prevailed remained unbroken until the arrival of Corbé and the unfortunate Baron de St. Auney, accompanied by four soldiers of the garrison, who, on a sign from D'Argenson, ranged themselves on each side of the door, two outside, and two within: the prisoner was the first to speak.

"I need not ask why I have been brought hither," said he, in a hollow, husky voice; "I can see that my fate is sealed! My poor, poor girls! Heaven alone can protect them!"

Any one but his stern, implacable jailers, would have been moved at the appearance presented by the wretched and persecuted nobleman; since the night of his consignment to the prison that he had just quitted, he had been allowed neither change of linen, nor water to wash; his beard was half an inch in length, his eyes were sunken, his cheeks hollow, and his body bent almost double; he had remained undisturbed in his solitude all the time, without a voice to cheer him—for even Ru maintained an obstinate silence—and without once leaving his cell, though he had often begged hard to be allowed to breathe the air on the platform: yet, besides the one great consolation of afflicted hearts—a fervent and frequent appeal to Heaven for protection for himself and his children—he had found some comfort in the perusal of Jeanne's letter, which Ru one day tossed to him as he quitted his cell; this strengthened him in the hour of despondency; but when he perceived the kind of cell into which he was brought, and the various instruments strewn about on every side, his heart failed him, and in the presence of his persecutor, all his new-born hopes fled.

"Take down the prisoner's words," said D'Argenson to Corbé, who had now seated himself next to his uncle, and was smoothing down with the cuff of his coat the paper he had brought: "thou knowest his name and titles!"

The Lieutenant-Governor nodded, and commenced writing: when he had concluded the preamble, the principal personage re-commenced.

"Baron de St. Auney! Dost thou know the crime of which thou art accused!"

"I have never—to my knowledge—committed any," replied the Baron with great dignity, "how then should I know what thy invention has conceived against me?"

"You are all witnesses that the prisoner charges me with falsehood," observed D'Argenson, looking around him; perceiving that they all tacitly agreed to witness only what he desired them to do, he again addressed the Baron.

"Thou shalt receive justice, Sieur Baron—fair and impartial justice—I therefore charge thee to be cautious in thy replies, for upon them wilt thou be judged."

"I shall answer the truth, Monseigneur; if thou judgest me upon that, I fear not the result."

"Thou art accused of forgery then," resumed the Lieutenant of Police; "either as a principal, or as privy to the act: what hast thou to say to it?"

"That 'tis false, Sieur D'Argenson! Who is my accuser?"

"I!" retorted the latter, exultingly; "I am thy accuser, and hold his Majesty's warrant—given under his own hand—for thy detention, until thou hast confessed who forged the bond that was forced upon the notary, Etienne Quinault! Thou didst share the benefit of that transaction, and must therefore know more about it than thou carest to acknowledge."

"Thou, my accuser, Sieur D'Argenson!" exclaimed the Baron; "and thou my judge likewise! Has thy persecution of me then no limits? What justice can I expect at thy hands? Let me return to my dungeon, that thou may'st not perjure thyself in the face of Heaven; or, do thou be just, for once, and release me, and my poor dear child, for we never harmed thee:" here the large tears rolled down his face and fell fast and abundantly upon the ground, whilst his sobs, that he could not smother, deprived him, for the time, of the power of speech.

"Thou and thy daughter are both prisoners here, by virtue of the same warrant," observed D'Argenson, unmoved; "confess thy crime, or who was thy accomplice, and she shall depart hence; refuse, and we will find means to compel thee!"

The Baron stood for a moment appalled by this announcement, and his flesh grew cold and damp as he turned his gaze from his accuser to his colleagues, and from them again to the sombre den in which he stood, and upon the horrible apparatus that surrounded them; there they sat, mute as spectres, with the flickering light, falling in dull red flashes upon their malign countenances, imparting to them an appearance that was any thing but earthly, and little less than devilish. D'Argenson's fists were clenched together, he had brought them into contact with the table, against which he leaned forwards from his chair, with his deeply sunken eyes—glaring like a cat's at night—fixed steadily upon the Baron, and his dark shaggy brows contracted so closely together, that they seemed to form but one long black division between the upper part of his face and the lower; his yellow cheek had assumed a death-like hue, and his thin shrivelled lips were drawn up and pursed together with an expression of concentrated malice and evil energy that rendered his aspect perfectly hideous.

A short interval—a very short interval—but in that brief space what agony De St. Auney endured—sufficed to recall his thoughts to the point whence they had strayed: he drew himself proudly up, and in turn fixing his eyes upon his accuser, whilst an air of scorn played over his noble features, answered:

"I have nothing to confess, and thou knowest it! Traitor; villain; wretch! dost think to cajole me by so foul an artifice? Have I not already had sufficient proofs of thy treachery to be now deceived by thee, and not to know what passes in thy breast? How can I confess my guilt of a crime thou knowest I am innocent of? Did I even do so, and to save my poor child, tell thee a lie, what guarantee have I that thou would'st set her free? or that having released her, thou would'st not again entrap her on some fouler pretext? No! monster in human form! thou knowest not how to respect the truth, and I do not know how to lie! I will not save my life at the expense of my honour!"

"But thy daughter," shouted the enraged Lieutenant of Police—"thy fair, thy beautiful Julie! So like thy sister! ah! ah! *tonne.re dieu!* I have thee there! She is in my power—dost hear that?"

"She is in the hands of Him above," replied the afflicted father, his breast heaving convulsively; "she knows her duty, and though a child, will not shrink from it! she would blush to owe her safety to her father's shame."

"Wilt thou confess thy guilt?" screamed D'Argenson; "who gave thee these?" and he here exhibited the bonds that Etienne Quinault had given up to Jacques, and which the latter had, in turn, placed in the Baron's possession.

"I have told thee all," replied the Baron; "urge me no further, for more I cannot say than I have said already! I received those papers through an unknown channel, and made the use of them that thou knowest!"

"A likely story, *mort dieu!* Wilt thou likewise deny all knowledge of this bond? 'tis signed by a name should sound pleasant in thy ears; see! upon this forged document a hundred thousand crowns were extorted from Quinault! speak!"

The Baron drew up to the table and looked at the bond; he started when he read the signature, and exclaimed:

"Would to heaven I knew the bottom of this! I am ignorant of the transaction altogether, Sieur D'Argenson! On my honour I am!"

"Ah! ah! ah!" shouted the latter; "wilt thou sign this! read, and answer."

He handed him a paper, which de St. Auney took, and examined; he changed colour as he became acquainted with its contents, but having completed its perusal, threw it from him with a haughty air, and walked away in silence, without condescending to look at his accuser.

"Ah! thou refusest!" vociferated the latter, clutching the table; "but it shall not save thee! thou art guilty, and shalt sign this confession of thy crime! I hold thee now, and thou shalt not escape me! Thou didst scorn *me* once—*sang dieu!* Thou didst teach her, whom I loved, to loathe me—but the hour of vengeance has come: I swore to hate thee and thine, her and her's, for the contempt she shewed towards me! Thee and thine I can destroy! she is dead, and so is her husband; but he—their brat, still lives—I know it, and will destroy him too—and thou and he shall meet here—and shall die—rotten in the same dungeon! I am on his track! ah! ah! ah! He is alive—alive—dost hear that, Sieur Baron! thy nephew lives—and thou shalt see him 'ere long!"

"Thank God!" cried the Baron, clasping his hands together, "I have done my duty! But oh, Monseigneur! shew some pity to an old man! I cannot live now many years, for grief has nearly broken my heart: let my aged eyes be closed by the hand of my children; and let me hear them pronounce my name, and once more feel their lips cling to mine ere I leave them for ever! let me too behold, free and unfettered, the child of my dear Constance! Thou didst once love her! her only offence was not loving thee in return! ah! Monseigneur, let her spirit not invoke Heaven's malediction upon thy

head! spare her child! spare my children! pity for them! not for me! pity, I—I beseech thee! pity!"

"Pity! What's that?" asked D'Argenson with a fiendish chuckle; "did she pity me? No! when I besought her to love me, she laughed at me, jeered and scorned me! Pity, indeed! ah! ah! ah! It does not live here! we are in the Bastile, *sang dieu!* Hulloa!" he abruptly exclaimed, looking in the direction where Ru was standing, and addressing him: "what's the matter with thee? fool!"

"Musn't my eyes itch!" asked the *porte-clefs*, boring his large knuckles into the sockets of his eyes.

As there was no answering this very simple question, involving, as it did, an abstract problem connected with the doctrine of Probabilities, the principal personage looked down very hard at the table, and then up, equally hard at his colleagues, having whispered the eldest of whom, he once more spoke to De St. Auney:

"For the last time," said he, "I ask thee, Baron de St. Auney, to confess thy crime and thy accomplice! Here is the paper: wilt thou sign it?"

The Baron waved his hand negatively—for his anguish was too intense to permit him to speak—and tremblingly awaited the result.

D'Argenson no sooner understood the sign, than he leaped from his chair, and striking the table with his clenched hand, exclaimed, with a frightful oath, that made even the hardened assistants shudder:

"By Heaven thou *shalt* sign it."

A few glances were now interchanged between the parties: St. Marc took D'Argenson's place, whilst *he* advanced with Corbé and Riquelet to the spot where the Baron was standing; beckoning the soldiers, the latter placed their muskets against the wall, and seized their unfortunate victim.

The calmness of the Baron at this juncture was frightful to behold; it was evident that he maintained it only at the expense of an immense effort; large drops of cold perspiration streamed down his cheek, from every pore; his teeth were firmly set together, and his lips compressed, but though his countenance was pallid, it indicated no irresolution: when they laid hands upon him, he turned his eyes to Heaven, his lips moved, and a tear fell from his eyes: here all outward emotion ceased.

"Bind him yonder," said D'Argenson, pointing to the wooden post at the other end of the chamber, "Ru; to thy office."

This functionary immediately cast off his jerkin, and baring his arms, bound the Baron's to the wooden pillar, so that he could not move, whilst the Lieutenant of Police signed to Corbé and Riquelet to fetch the boot, which was very ponderous. They then proceeded to strip their unfortunate victim's legs and feet, and to place one of them in the machine, Ru holding it the while; when every thing was prepared, D'Argenson again asked the Baron to sign the paper, but he again refused, and in the most peremptory manner.

"Screw!" exclaimed D'Argenson: Ru looked up at him irresolute. "*Ventre bleu!* dost hear me?" reiterated he.

Thus admonished, the *porte-clefs* began very slowly turning a small pivot with a hand-winch, that, by a simple piece of mechanism, caused

the iron-plates and springs of which the boot was constructed, to collapse gradually together until, from the knee downwards, the wretched victim's leg was completely encased therein; still he did not flinch:

"Harder! harder!" vociferated the Lieutenant of Police; "*sang dieu!*"

The *porte-clefs* appeared to struggle very hard to get the winch to turn, becoming exceedingly purple in the face with the exertion, but the more he tried, the less the winch moved; at last he stopped, wiped his face with the back of his hand, and asked to be accommodated with a glass of wine.

"Go on!" cried D'Argenson; "thou shalt have wine when we have done."

But although Ru resumed his operations upon the winch, it obstinately refused to stir! upon which, the Lieutenant broke out into a volley of execrations intermingled with threats of putting Ru himself to the torture if he did not do his duty.

"The screws are rusty," said that individual, "and the springs too!"

"Let me try," exclaimed Corbé, pushing the other away; "I'll make it turn!"

Seizing the winch with both hands, he turned it round twice or thrice with the greatest ease, much to the apparent astonishment of the *porte clefs*; the effects of his manipulation soon manifested itself; the Baron shuddered, and the hue of his complexion turned almost to the lividity of death; still he spoke not.

"Wilt thou sign?" cried D'Argenson in his ear.

"Never!" replied De St. Auney, in a husky voice.

"Screw!" shouted the former; and again Corbé applied himself to his hideous task.

"There goes the knee-pan!" observed Ru, as a slight report like that of a walnut being cracked, fell on his ear.

"Wilt thou sign the paper?" demanded the Lieutenant of Police, trembling, and wiping the water from his forehead: the Baron shook his head:

"Screw! screw! *tonnere dieu!*" shouted his persecutor, and again Corbé resumed his work.

There succeeded a very brief pause, when a second small report was heard:

"That's the ancle-bone," muttered the *porte-clefs*.

"Wilt thou sign now?" demanded D'Argenson, again, in a hurried, anxious tone: "thy daughter shall go free! I swear it; by St. Marc!" this was his patron saint.

"Give me the pen," said the Baron, in an almost inaudible voice.

D'Argenson snatched the pen from the hand of St. Marc—who had been taking minutes of the proceedings—and ordering Ru to loose the Baron's arms from the leathern thongs that confined them, presented him the pen, converting the crown of his beaver into a temporary writing-desk, and spreading out the paper upon it: it purported to be a confession made by the Baron de St. Auney, acknowledging himself guilty of the forgery of the bond ostensibly signed by the Sieur St. Angin.

The sufferer, with an effort to suppress any expression of the agony

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he endured, took the pen, and rapidly tracing the words, "*False; false!*" at the foot of the document, appended his name thereto; this done, his arms dropped, and he would have fallen down, had not one of the soldiers caught him: he had fainted.

"*Mort dieu!*" shouted the thunderstruck and enraged Lieutenant, looking at the paper; "cheated? Screw! screw!"

"He can't bear any more now," observed Riquelet, who on these occasions officiated in the double capacity of confessor and surgeon.

"Unscrew him then, and take him to his cell," replied D'Argenson; "curses on him!" Tearing the document into fragments, he beckoned St. Marc to follow him, and quitted the horrid scene, venting his rage in execrations.

The Baron having been released by Corbé and Ru, was at once carried up into his apartment, by the two soldiers, Father Riquelet accompanying them, leaving the Lieutenant-Governor and the *porte-clefs* together.

"Help me to put this up," exclaimed the latter, to his companion, taking hold of one end of the ponderous boot: the latter unsuspiciously acquiesced, and grasped the other end, for the purpose of lifting it upon Ru's shoulder, when the man suddenly seized him by the arm, and forcing it into the machine in spite of the other's struggles, held it there until he had turned the winch sufficiently to fix the captured member: in vain, the wretch stamped and roared with pain, Ru only screwed the winch the tighter:

"Ah! ah! ah!" said he; "the screws aren't rusty now; are they? Is n't it pleasant, eh? How do you like it?"

"Let me go!" screamed the other.

"You'll put me into the dungeon, won't you," answered Ru, giving the winch a sharp turn; "ah! ah! ah! How nicely I could lock you in here now; I don't think I could manage to lose the key either! If I did, nobody would be the wiser! That *would* be a good joke; wouldn't it? ah! ah! ah!"

The yells of the prisoner became frightful, but notwithstanding them, Ru continued to taunt and jeer him, jumping round and round him apparently in the highest glee: concluding, however, that he had afforded his captive ample opportunity of acquiring a practical knowledge of the exact nicety of pressure to which a human limb could be subjected without positive dislocation, he gave the winch one more turn, and then suddenly let go the springs, with a view to allow the blood to rush back through its customary channels as rapidly as possible, thereby increasing Corbé's agony to an exquisite degree.

"Another squeeze would have broken your elbow!" observed he, as the Lieutenant-Governor hobbled away groaning and half-maimed; "you'll go and tell the old one what I've done now, won't you? do! that'sall! it 'll make you and me better friends; a good deal! ah! ah! ah!"

Corbé could only threaten him with looks, which he did liberally enough, as he halted away, with Ru close in his rear, who kept up the conversation in this agreeable manner, until they reached the great court, where they parted, each of them returning to his respective quarters.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ST. MARCEL AND DEMOCRITUS EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS VERY FREELY UPON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS.

If the reader ever experienced—and should he chance to be a very young gentleman, he undoubtedly has—any peculiar, unaccountable, undefinable, indescribable emotion consequent upon his personal acquaintance with some fair, youthful being belonging to the opposite sex into whose society accident, or design, or fate—which may be considered a mixture of both these—once brought him, and can remember that the effect of this emotion was the making him feel, to an extreme degree, uncomfortable, and timid, and bashful, and awkward, and confused, when in her presence, and when out of it, melancholy and desponding—inspiring him with unconquerable prejudices in favour of Byronic shirt-collars, with a leaning—though otherwise not of a poetic turn—towards the perpetration of sonnets to the moon—or a predilection for tragedy, and impersonating Romeo, or Hamlet—fancying the young lady in question to be metamorphosed into a Juliet, or into the more bewildered Ophelia; and that he can, moreover, remember how, on some particular occasion—which though not precised here, the reader will certainly call to mind—a sudden and intense hatred sprang up in his breast against a certain strange young gentleman who became the means of restoring to the said young lady, her fan, or her glove, or her handkerchief, or the nosegay she happened to let fall, upon which he—not the strange young gentleman—immediately retired into a remote corner, and there, in dignified silence, brooded over his wrongs, designing all kinds of fatal mischief against the favoured picker-up of the precious article, mixing up his meditations with a remote intention of swallowing phosphorus, or prussic-acid, or of seeking some other illegal method of disappearing mysteriously from the world, leaving the young thing to the most painful conjectures as to his fate; and that he can further recollect, how—upon a sudden smile, or a kindly glance of recognition, or a soft whisper, or some equally trifling token of favor from this fair creature—these dark thoughts were suddenly dispelled, as if by magic, causing him not only to feel once more immeasurably happy, as he had felt often before, but at the same time an unutterable contempt for the strange young gentleman, coupled with a wish—a latent wish—that the house might accidentally take fire in order to afford just a sufficient excuse for rushing out of the flames with the young lady in his arms: if the reader can recollect all this, or any part of it, or any thing approaching to it, as having once occurred to him, he may make up his mind to the fact—in spite of any open assertion to the contrary—of his having been in love!

This granted, let him call to mind the rapture with which he dwelt upon every word—every look—every gesture of her who had inspired him with the incipient passion: how eagerly he used to anticipate the day—the hour—nay, the minute when he should again behold

her: how her image alone engrossed his whole soul, she being to him an entire universe, the measure of whose time was made up of the periods that marked separations and meetings; the hours passed in her company reckoning for nothing; but—by way of establishing a compensation—those passed out of it counting double: let him remember all this—adding as many incidental circumstances as his own experience may suggest—and he may conceive some idea of the state of St. Marcel's feelings upon discovering that Jeanne de St. Auney was missing from her father's residence.

Dame Prevôt gave an elaborate account of her young mistress's disappearance, interspersed with equally full particulars of the various warnings she herself had received, of the coming calamity, as likewise a circumstantial relation of the mysterious visit that Jacques paid them on the morning after the occurrence, and of his sudden departure for the Convent whither they gave him to understand Jeanne had been conveyed, immediately upon his learning the mode of her abduction, terminating her narrative with a wish that they were once more safe at La Gâcherie, for she thought many things more *re*-markable might happen than *her* being carried off next; indeed, she should not be at all surprised if somebody attempted it: oh dear no!

The young man took his leave of the garrulous dame, with a sad heart and a lengthened visage, and wandered listlessly about the city until night, when he repaired to Lutetia, in the hopes of arriving, through Jacques, at the bottom of the transaction.

Democritus manifested some astonishment to see him at so early an hour, and noticing his despondency, questioned him as to the cause of it, which St. Marcel recounted in as few words as possible, expressing himself, however, with a warmth that proved the strength of the passion he had conceived for the Baron's daughter, although up to that period, he had scarcely dared acknowledge it even to himself.

"I can understand thy feelings, friend Marcellus," said the philosopher; "I had already entertained suspicions as to the state of thy heart, as thou canst remember, for I expressed my opinion pretty freely at the time, though thou would'st not confess the truth. But thou hast forgotten to name the idol of thy affections: I am discreet: honour!"

St. Marcel smiled and gave his friend the name, at the mention of which Democritus appeared somewhat astonished.

"De St. Auney! De St. Auney!" said he, musingly; "singular! very! uncommonly singular! That name has occurred to me before, friend Marcellus, but coupled with another—one Count de St. Angin."

"St. Angin!" exclaimed St. Marcel half to himself, and whose turn it now was to be surprised: "that is the name I affixed to the bond which Jacques gave to Etienne Quinault!"

"The coincidence is striking," observed Democritus; "for, strange as it may appear, Etienne Quinault's name is on the superscription of a letter in my possession; the same, indeed, in which mention is made of the Sieur Baron de St. Auney, and the Count de St. Angin; the letter is dated many years ago, from Tours, and is signed by D'Argenson! May I ask thee what bond it was thou wert speaking of?"

St. Marcel recapitulated the circumstances under which Jacques had induced him to sign the document in question, as likewise the use that individual purposed making of it, the philosopher listening to his recital with great gravity.

"Our Emperor is a very mysterious man, Marcellus," observed he, as his friend stopped short; "we none of us can comprehend him; and his power, though he is apparently so obscure an individual, is even greater than that of the Lieutenant of Police! I do not well see how thou could'st have refused to do his bidding, but I am not apprehensive of the consequences, for I would stake my life upon his honour. I cannot however—I must confess that I cannot—infer what his motives were for acting so towards thee; but 'tis like him, Marcellus! and depend upon it his reasons were wise ones."

"I cannot comprehend, any more than thou," answered St. Marcel, "the strange link of connexion that appears to exist between us; he befriended me at a most critical juncture, and I am grateful to him for it; still, I wish he would be explicit, and solve my doubts; but he always evades the subject. Thus have I gone on, from day to day, until I find myself so mixed up with him—and his mysterious transactions, that to throw off the yoke—for such the being a Lutetian seems to me—would be fraught with more danger than my continuing to wear it!"

Democritus smiled as he answered:

"The danger, Marcellus, *would* be great; inasmuch as thou would'st lose the friendship of those who are best able to protect thee from the evil consequences arising from the abuse which our arbitrary government makes of its power. This system of espionage which our monarch established—when he created La Reynie Lieutenant of the Police, an office now filled by Monsieur D'Argenson, is replete with danger to the peace and liberty of the citizen; the most frivolous pretext which the mere envy of a neighbour—the cupidity of a minister—the hatred of a court favourite—or a desire of vengeance may suggest, is now sufficient to subject thee, or me, or any other peaceful citizen to a domiciliary visit from the agents of the police, or to render us the victims of a *lettre-de-cachet* and the Bastile; both used as common instruments of terror for the extortion of money, or for the gaining over of a party to any design that those in office may seek to accomplish! Art thou enamoured, and should some higher personage cast his eyes upon the object of thy affections, the Bastile is certain to become thy portion, and perhaps her's! Hast thou a wife—a daughter—and should either excite the passion of one more powerful than thyself, a *lettre-de-cachet* against thee is soon obtained, and thy shame and misery consummated with impunity, even before thy very eyes! Such crimes as these, Marcellus, have peopled Lutetia—though not entirely I admit! The impunity with which such crimes, or similar ones against the liberty of the citizen can be committed, renders a Lutetian's friendship valuable; but the being one's self a Lutetian, is a safeguard against oppression such as this which only the oppressed can appreciate!"

"But the secrets of the community, Democritus; is there no fear of their being betrayed? May there not be traitors in the camp?"

"Is there any danger, thinkest thou, Marcellus, of thy prating abroad, of the circumstance that induced thee to join us! I read thy answer in thy countenance! Well! we are all bound by similar ties to secrecy! Our self-preservation is involved, or our well-being, or that of some of our relatives or friends! Who could betray us, without the circumstance transpiring? are there not a hundred eyes upon the movements of each of us? is not every movement we make, marked and noted, from day to day."

"But some adverse chance might prove fatal to this secret, notwithstanding."

"Bah!" exclaimed the philosoper, impatiently; "even should chance prove contrary to us, we are in a position to defy the possibility of any evil results. Our Emperor's measures for our security, are too well taken; and so far from a sense of safety rendering him careless, it serves only to urge him to use greater vigilance."

"Well," observed St. Marcel, with a sigh and a shake of the head; "I am free to confess, that although one of the community, I do not on that account entertain any higher opinion of the character of my brethren, and I often blush to think I am a—a—there—I can't say the word!"

"A *mouchard!*" suggested his companion; "a mistake, Marcellus —quite a mistake. Though we are to a certain extent spies, we have none of that class amongst us; they are all known to us, because we are of necessity brought into contact with them; hut *they* are D'Argenson's agents, with whom we have nothing in common: nothing! Is it because we are a motley company, that thou holdest us in contempt, friend Marcellus? Thinkest thou that yonder artizan —who by the way is making too free with his sleeping neighbour's wine just now—thinkest thou, I say, that he is beneath thy friendship or thy consideration, because circumstance made him a wheel-wright?"

"I am aware, Chevalier, that Nature created us equal in regard to rank, for we are all members of the same family; still, some she endowed with greater strength, or higher capacities, superior energies, or loftier sentiments, by the exercise of which, these were enabled to assume over their fellows, an authority the latter could not withstand or overthrow; hence originated distinction of rank, or according to our more modern notions, hence arose aristocracy."

"Good! good! Marcellus! I perceive thou and I shall not long disagree on this chapter! Society is, and has ever been so constituted, that an aristocracy, in some shape or other, is as necessary to its existence and its well-being as are the members to that of the human body; and had it not been so intended, from the beginning, Nature would have created us equal in every particular. It is not, however, with the existing order of society, that I quarrel, but with the heinous abuses that have crept into it! For instance; I cannot understand how accident of birth can lead one man to suppose it privileges him to contemn and oppress another whom only artificial distinction places

in a lower grade! Is not the artizan who manufactures the sedan, or the more luxurious coach, as good—provided he is honest—and as worthy of consideration, as the noble who rides in it? or the humble labourer, who tills the earth, as much as the proud lord who profits by his husbandry? or the working-classes, in a mass, are they not as great as those whose enjoyments and luxuries of dress and taste depend upon the exercise of their industry? I know thou wilt answer, yes! Yet, thou canst not deny that our aristocracy look upon those very working-classes as quite another race, and as distinct from their's as the brute creation; treating them either little better than slaves, or as simple instruments of their will, fit only to bow submissively beneath the yoke imposed upon them! Hence have arisen those ignoble distinctions between the higher and the so-called lower orders, that have brought aristocracy into disrepute, and engendered opinions that, though now slumbering, or only occasionally manifesting themselves, threaten at no distant day to burst out with irresistible force, and overwhelm not only the government of the country, but the country itself, in one common ruin! I speak knowingly, friend Marcellus, for I have had opportunity of observing these matters closely!"

"It is certain, Democritus, that our social system is full of glaring evils and abuses! that our nobility have heaped degradation upon degradation on the lower born, and do oppress them to an extent that renders their patience quite inexplicable! that the rich and powerful man, with wrong on his side, shall be certain of gaining the advantage over a poorer and more obscure individual who has only the justice of his cause to befriend him! Still, any other system would engender similar evils; for where there exists power, there will also exist oppression; and thus it has ever been! To return, however, to the point whence we have strayed; no man more than myself, honours the honest artizan or the upright man, whatever his station; still, the prejudices I have imbibed from the society in which I have mixed are such, that I must confess I should redden to be seen frequenting those whom that society calls vulgar."

"I like thy candour, Marcellus; it proves thee to be truly noble—though thy name is not of the very first water—" here St. Marcel coloured very deeply, but the philosopher did not observe his confusion, and continued: "thy prejudices thou wilt out-live, for they do not arise from thy heart; and as I once entertained similar notions, I cannot quarrel with thee for thine on this score! Here, the expression of one's opinions is unshackled, which is more than I can say for any other part of Paris."

"Judging from the freedom of thine, Democritus, I should imagine that thou hast ample cause to rejoice in the protection Lutetia affords thee, for half of what has passed between us this evening, expressed within hearing of any of D'Argenson's *mouchards*, would have certainly insured both of us board and lodging at the expense of government."

"Thou sayest truly, Marcellus! more is the pity! Depend on it

'tis a grave error in polity, to impose fetters upon individual opinion: it brings the laws into contempt, and fosters a hatred of those, who enjoying the advantage of position, are comparatively free to think and speak as they like: it sows the seeds of disaffection amongst the people; chafes their galled spirit into insubordination, and induces in them a desire to try whether some other system of government would not be more congenial; for, injustice and oppression cannot always maintain the upper hand! Why, within the last month, upwards of two hundred families in Paris alone, have been thrown into the completest misery, by the arrest of one or more of the members belonging to them! a father here, a brother there, and sometimes parent and child together! need it be asked whither they have disappeared, when we see the hated Bastile frowning over our very homes? And what is the crime they are accused of? speaking their mind, as you and I have done! But this advantage is only temporary; 'tis the shameful victory of the strong over the weak, and although we may neither of *us* live to behold that day, my word for it, Marcellus, a day will come, when the people—now so despised, so oppressed, and so ground down by taxation—will turn round upon their rulers, and take terrible vengeance."

"May I ask thee, Chevalier, whether Lutetia contains many such as thou? This democratic spirit has burst upon me unawares, and reminds me that I have sworn allegiance to our Grand Monarque."

"Ah! ah! ah! never fear, Marcellus! thou art unaccustomed to hear opinions so freely expressed, and therefore art alarmed! We are not enemies of Louis Quatorze, but the enemies of oppression! Our political opinions are diverse, I admit, and some, not altogether loyal, according to present received notions of loyalty; still, they do not affect *thy* oath of allegiance, which thou art not asked to forswear; all that is exacted of *thee*, is to remember that thou hast been saved by the Lutetians from imminent peril, and in return, to hold sacred as thy allegiance, all thou mayest see or hear."

"Thou hast set my conscience at rest upon one point," answered St. Marcel, smiling; "but were not my honour pledged to observe secrecy with regard to the existence of this rat-like community, my own safety would compel me. Since we have, however, touched upon this subject, Democritus, thou wilt perhaps satisfy me as to the definite object of this association, for up to the present time, I have remained in ignorance of it!"

"What definite object the Emperor may have in view, I know not, Marcellus; we are a Masonic order, and are bound by oath, to succour our fellow-citizens, and afford them, by all the means in our power, protection against that system of injustice and oppression, which, under the existing corrupt government of the realm, may be exercised with impunity against any individual whomsoever; and since secret associations of every nature are prohibited, we assemble here, in order to ensure ourselves from intrusion!"

"From the disreputable character of the neighbourhood, infested as it is by all kinds of notorious criminals, who here find sanctuary,

I apprehended that Lutetia was not free from them: am I mistaken, friend Democritus?"

"Thou art, Marcellus! our secret would not be safe with such; besides, none are admitted here whose character is suspicious."

"Nay! Democritus! Are there not amongst us, many paid spies of the secret police?"

"Yes!" responded the philosopher; "our Emperor, who, from some secret motive unknown to us, is D'Argenson's mortal enemy, and counteracts his evil influence whenever the opportunity presents itself, is in the intimacy of the Lieutenant of Police, and was in La Reynie's, when he held the same office! I need not explain to thee the advantages he derives from this position, or how materially these are made to contribute to our interests, to our safety, in a word, to the furtherance of our philanthropic ends."

"I see it all," responded St. Marcel; "but, besides Jacques, or the Emperor, as thou, in Lutetian phraseology, callest him, I perceive several men here, who are likewise in the secret service of Monseigneur D'Argenson!"

"There *are*, and many of them, amongst us, Marcellus; but they are the Emperor's confidential agents, who have joined the secret police to serve Lutetia, not their unprincipled superior. Yonder sits one whom, perhaps, thou art not acquainted with, but who, nevertheless, knows well that thou hast been walking moodily about Paris, all this day: he is paid by D'Argenson to observe thy movements, and to report the same."

Democritus pointed, unperceived, to the person in question, who was earnestly discussing the merits of a very nice point at *picket* which two of his companions had submitted to his arbitration; St. Marcel considered him a moment, but did not succeed in recognizing his features.

"This intelligence of thine, Chevalier, rather startles me," said he; "I certainly do not know that man, nor am I aware in what manner I can have fallen under the suspicion of the Lieutenant of Police. As thou art so well informed on other points, perhaps thou canst enlighten me on this!"

"Indeed I cannot, Marcellus!"

"Then, since what period, friend Democritus, have I been under surveillance? Dost thou know?"

"Not exactly, Marcellus! But within a week after thy introduction here, certainly!"

St. Marcel reflected a moment, and replied:

"It was about that time I formed the acquaintance of Jeanne de St. Auney: I also now recollect meeting with Monseigneur D'Argenson very unexpectedly, on the very morning that I first saw her: it was at the gate of the Luxembourg gardens, where I quitted her."

"Art thou aware of D'Argenson's persecution of that unhappy nobleman, Marcellus?"

"His daughter made me acquainted with the circumstance," answered St. Marcel.

"And dost thou entertain no suspicion as to the abductor of that maiden, Marcellus?"

The philosopher's peculiar tone and look conveyed a volume of intelligence to the quick mind of the lover, who became very red and then very pale, and then red again, and remained, some moments, unable to utter a word; at length he said, his lips all the time quivering with suppressed passion:

"D'Argenson is a greater villain than I imagined; yet, I cannot comprehend why my visits at the Baron's residence should excite his suspicions of me, unless indeed, falling in love be accounted a crime!"

"It is not absolutely necessary that a man should be guilty of crime to become an object of suspicion to the Lieutenant of Police," observed Democritus, gravely; "however thou hast nothing to fear from thy companion yonder, who will give no information to his employer likely to compromise thee! But art thou certain, Marcellus, of never having committed any act of a nature to draw down upon thee the attention of our civil authorities?"

"With the exception of my mad freak on the Pont-Neuf, and my acquiescence with the Emperor's project in connexion with that bond, I am aware of none that I have cause to blush for!"

"Canst thou remember that any of thy relatives were ever at variance with Monseigneur? He is a man who never forgives, and who will revenge himself not only upon those who offend him, but upon their kindred. Nay! don't change colour, Marcellus! if any circumstance of this kind exists, and the mention of it causes thee pain, I am one of the last to press inquiry: but as I do entertain a sincere regard for thee—"

"No apology, friend Democritus," answered St. Marcel; "thou meanest well, though thy question does, I confess, embarrass me, for I have no kindred—or at least if I have, I know them not: I am a foundling!"

"St. Marcel le Trouvé!" ejaculated the philosopher; "a very appropriate name! I shall be glad to hear thy story, Marcellus."

"I had already promised to give it thee, Chevalier, and can satisfy thy curiosity in a very few words! My earliest recollections are of bright, sunny days, and clear blue skies, and long rambles, through green fields on the flowery banks of a small shining river, into which I used to cast small pebbles to scare the fish that glided in shoals beneath its waters. One day, I strayed from my nurse—who had fallen asleep beneath a tree—to gather wild strawberries, when a strange man suddenly rushed out of the hedge, seized me by the arm, and putting his hand over my mouth, concealed me beneath his cloak, and hurried away with me into a wood, where we remained until night. He then set off again, telling me he was going to take me back to my nurse, but when he released me, I found myself in a small room, where there was a bed, into which I was put. I must have fallen asleep almost immediately, and have slept a long time, for on awaking, I was in some kind of vehicle, and sitting in the lap of a soldier, who told me that I should see my nurse at our journey's end. After travelling a day and a night, we reached a large city, that I have

since concluded was Paris. My conductor left me at the house of a strange female, who immediately stripped me of my own clothes, and furnished me with others. How long I remained with her, I cannot tell, but it was not very long; nor do I know how, on leaving her, I came to be incorporated as an *enfant de troupe*, in one of the infantry regiments that had served in Flanders, and was at this period garrisoned in Paris, I can, however, recollect being one morning placed in a baggage-waggon, along with a number of children and women—that we left the city, and travelled many days and nights without stopping, until we reached our destination, Strasbourg, which, as thou knowest, Louvois had recently taken, and added to the empire of our Grand Monarque. Here, I may say, I began my military education, and here I remained until old enough to beat a drum, when I was drafted into a regiment belonging to the army of observation on the frontiers, intended to check the manœuvres of the recently formed League of Augsburg: from this period, my story is confounded with the exploits of the various corps I served in. I first shouldered a musket at Fleurus, ten years ago, and two years after, fought at Steinkerque, where I first joined the regiment of which Schwillwein was captain, having then risen from the humble drummer-boy to the rank of sub-officer. After the seige of Mons, an unexpected skirmish afforded me an opportunity of distinguishing myself. I was the chief means of preventing a valuable convoy, destined for Monsieur de Chartres' regiment, from falling into the hands of the enemy, and the sub-lieutenant who had charge of it having been killed in the fray, I was promoted to the vacancy. Three years after, at Nerwinden, another stroke of good fortune enabled me to save Schwillwein's life, whose favourable mention of me, procured my advancement to the rank of lieutenant. The brilliant and rapid successes of our commander-in-chief, Luxembourg, having brought about the Peace of Ryswick, I was offered a captaincy in my own regiment, but Schwillwein, having in the interim been appointed Commandant of the Musketeers, I preferred accepting the rank of lieutenant in the same corps, which rank I still hold, until the opportunity offers of attaining a higher one: this, friend Democritus, is my story."

"But thou hast not told me now, how thou camest by thy name, Marcellus," observed the philosopher; "it struck me as being a singular one from the first."

"There is little interest connected with it," answered St. Marcel; "and I am, I believe, entirely indebted to chance for it. I can remember always being called St. Marcel le Trouvé by my comrades, from the time I became an *enfant de troupe*, up to the present moment; and from what I was able to glean from them, it would appear, that the drummer of one of the regiments I first mentioned, was returning to his quarters one night, rather later than usual, and rather the worse for wine, when he perceived a something lying in a *porte-cochère*, which turned out to be *me*, fast asleep. A narcotic draught had been administered to me it seems, for I was perfectly insensible, and remained so for some hours. However, the kind-hearted old soldier took me up in his arms, and carried me in triumph to his

barracks, declaring he would be a father to me. His name was Martial, to which his comrades had, in ridicule, appended the cognomen Saint—St. Martial being included in the calender—and by this name he christened me over a drum-head, by dashing a glass of wine in my face, and making me swallow another, which ceremony I perfectly remember: the circumstance of my being a foundling, led him to add Le Trouvé to my Christian name, both of which I have ever since retained, though the former has been corrupted into Marcel!"

"Didst thou ever learn what became of thy benefactor, Marcellus?"

"I grieve to say his end was disastrous. In a drunken fit he insulted a superior officer, was tried by a court-martial, and sentenced to military execution; but, unable to abide the disgrace, he found means to destroy himself in prison!"

"He deserved a better fate, Marcellus; he ought to have died a soldier's death: his conduct towards thee merited a free pardon. As for thy story, it has marvellously interested me, and I shall not now rest satisfied until we have discovered thy parentage! But see! here is the Emperor; I dare say he can satisfy thy doubts concerning the safety of Jeanne de St. Auney."

As will be imagined, St. Marcel soon found an opportunity of drawing Jacques aside and questioning him upon the subject so near his heart, and the spy in answer informed him of every particular connected with the transaction, relating, however, merely the bare facts, leaving him to form his own conjectures and make his own comments thereupon.

"I will have satisfaction of the Duke de Chartres," exclaimed he, in a burst of anger; "he is a traitor and a villain—and as for D'Argenson—"

"Chut!" replied Jacques, coolly; "D'Argenson is beyond *thy* reach; and as for Monsieur de Chartres, I do not see how he could guess thy heart was engaged to the Baron's daughter? Besides; did she ever confess her sentiments towards thee, friend St. Marcel?"

"I cannot answer thee positively, Sieur Jacques," responded the young man, colouring very deeply, "for I never pressed the point; but that she should be thus insulted, is surely a sufficient pretext for taking up arms in her defence?"

"If I blame thy precipitation, I admire thy spirit," observed the spy; "but thou must be guided by me in this matter! The maiden is for the present in a place of safety, where she will remain: what more could'st thou desire? then, the Duke is thy superior officer, and a Prince of the Blood: thou could'st not attack him without committing high treason, and breaking through all martial law, from the just punishment of which crimes no interest could save thee: and again, thou would'st be violating thy oath of secrecy to Lutetia, and compromising her safety, which thou art bound in honour to hold sacred; wherefore, friend St. Marcel, thou must consent to let matters take their course, and leave to me the arrangement of this affair. D'Argenson and I have a long score to settle, and I have not openly defied his power, without being fully prepared to meet the consequences. I will speak to thee further upon this matter, ere long, but I must

quit thee now, for I have much to do; yet, rest assured, that I will watch over the Baron's daughter with a more jealous eye even than thine."

St. Marcel grasped the spy's hand with great fervour, a mark of confidence that was cordially returned; and as Jacques withdrew to his own chamber, resumed his accustomed seat near to Democritus, with whom he soon became again engaged in animated conversation.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ST. LEU EFFECTS HIS ESCAPE FROM THE BASTILE.

St. Leu had been incarcerated nearly six weeks, when the event occurred, that brought him so unexpectedly into collision with Corbé and Riquelet; his feelings upon which occasion may readily be conceived but with difficulty expressed.

It was easy for him to infer that these individuals were mutually ignorant of each other's nefarious design—for the hurried manner in which Corbé concealed himself on the approach of Father Riquelet, and the precipitancy of his flight, coupled with the observations of the Jesuit, left no doubt of this fact—but the threats that fell from Ru, when the latter quitted him, partly opened his eyes to the design of this individual in bringing them all together, as if by chance, on the same identical night.

The fact was, that Corbé and Riquelet had long meditated—unknown to each other—the same project against the maiden, but had been compelled to defer its execution until they could secure Ru's connivance, without which the accomplishment of their base design was impracticable. But this individual, though he accepted their large bribes, always invented some new pretext for breaking his promise, in the hopes of extorting more money from them; or admitted them to Julie's cell, only when Sister Bridget was there, who, schooled by him, insisted upon the letter of the regulations of the *château*, and resolutely refused to quit her prisoner for an instant. On discovering, however, the connexion between St. Leu and Julie, Ru suddenly changed his plan of operations, and, spurred by a love of mischief, determined to gratify the wishes of all parties, after his own peculiar fashion, and in a manner they little anticipated: the result of his mischievous plot has been shewn; and in carrying out of the same, he displayed more policy than may at first be imagined, though his motives for acting as he did, might perhaps, not bear scrutiny. By involving the principal parties, Corbé and Riquelet, he sought to screen himself from the punishment that any accidental or wilful discovery of the affair, as it regarded himself and St. Leu, would certainly entail; the entire onus of which, the malice of either party might easily fix upon him.

But though frustrated in their intention, the two criminals did not lose sight of it, and having determined thenceforward to act in con-

cert, once more sought to gain over Ru to their purpose, who, however, pointedly refused to lend them his further co-operation; upon this ensued the scene to which D'Argenson became, so unexpectedly, a witness.

On the morning after his interview with Julie, St. Leu's cell underwent a second scrutiny, under the superintendence of Monsieur de Joncas, Ru, and an assistant jailer; every niche was scrupulously inspected; the bed and the matrass were unsewn and turned over, and even the iron-bars at the window examined, in order to ascertain whether the prisoner had attempted to loosen them; all this passed in silence, nor did Monsieur de Joncas pay the least attention to the few questions St. Leu addressed him, with respect to the probable duration of his captivity, but having accomplished his task, quitted the cell, followed by Ru and his companion.

At his usual hour, the *porte-clefs* again appeared with his prisoner's afternoon meal, when he informed him that he (St. Leu) would shortly be removed to the Tower of the Comté:

"I overheard St. Marc and Corbé talk about it," said he; "there's somebody there now, but he's going away in a week or ten days."

"And is there any likelihood of my being liberated?" inquired St. Leu.

"Can't say!" responded the *porte-clefs*; "have'nt heard! don't think there is—much! better try and make yourself happy!"

"And Julie! the young lady."

"I know!" observed Ru, nodding his head and winking his eye: "down there! Have'nt heard any thing about *her* either: tell you if I do! I like you, because you broke Riquelet's head! I wish it had been Corbé's! ah! ah! ah! good fun! Don't be afraid;" continued he, creeping up close to St. Leu, and whispering; "don't be afraid of any thing happening to her! She's got a friend! he's my friend too, now! perhaps you know him! his name's Jacques! he's D'Argenson's friend, too, and comes here very often, and he promised me lots of gold if I prevented any harm from coming to her! I'd do anything for gold, I would! and so would Sister Bridget: but not for every body! no! not for every body! Do you know Jacques? eh?"

St. Leu intimated that he did not.

"Oh!" ejaculated the *porte-clefs* musingly; and abruptly departed.

This intelligence concerning Jacques' interest in Julie, filled the young lover's heart with various surmises of the most conflicting kind, though they left him, at last, more at rest as to the likely issue of any further attempt that the Jesuit or the Lieutenant-Governor might be tempted to make upon her. She had spoken to him of Jacques—the letter he held from Jeanne to her sister likewise mentioned his name; thus, of his friendship he could entertain no doubt, whilst Ru, in affording him a proof of its potency, left him full of hope as to the effects he might expect it to produce in accomplishing the release of Julie.

His mind being comparatively tranquil on this score, he began again to ponder over his own fate, as he had already often done since his incarceration; and now it was that the despair to which he became a prey, spurred his invention to mature a plan of escape from the

horrors that perhaps awaited him. The idea, had, indeed, once before entered his brain, but was almost immediately abandoned as impracticable: now, however, that he had seen Julie—had again embraced her—now that he knew efforts were being made to procure her liberation, whilst his own was probably far distant, or altogether unlikely—now that he knew all this—and that if he could accomplish his own escape, he might be instrumental in hastening the day of *her* freedom—those difficulties that he had at first raised, suddenly vanished, and so indomitably was his resolution taken, he could scarcely believe but that the design he meditated had yet to be effected.

Only one mode of flight suggested itself, nor did the dangers that attended it affright him, or the paucity of means at his command, discourage him from turning them to the best account: he knew that if he attempted the step at all, no time was to be lost, and that if transferred to another dungeon, other obstacles might present themselves apparently equally insurmountable: he therefore commenced his preparations.

To conceal these from the vigilance of his jailers was the first great difficulty; for though Ru's visits took place, for the most part at fixed times—to which he was now pretty well accustomed—he was never certain but that he might drop in at other hours—as he had done that morning for instance—accompanied by one or another of the functionaries of the fortress; from which contingency he had every thing to apprehend, as his cell was likely again to be subjected to examination. Besides this, he had time against him—for he resolved not to afford his jailers the opportunity of changing his abode—and possessed few materials for the manufacture of the chief article he required, namely, a rope, long and strong enough to enable him to reach the ditch, from his point of descent at the summit of the tower: but nothing daunted, he went vigorously to work, upon such articles as he had, and before Ru returned with his morning meal, had completed a portion of his task.

Judging of the height of the towers from that of his cell, from the number of stories, and the space between each, he calculated upon requiring about a hundred and twenty feet of rope, but great was his dismay when he discovered that every available article of wearing-apparel that he possessed, added to the sheets and blankets of his bed, would not, when twisted into strands of the requisite strength, make up more than half the necessary quantity; still, he wrought on, with increasing assiduity, until he had no more materials to work with, save his outward garments, the sacking of his bed, the slight cords that held it together, and the bed-clothes themselves. In this dilemma, he feigned indisposition, in order to have a show of excuse for not getting up, and so far imposed upon Ru, as to induce this individual to supply him with an additional blanket and a coverlet; these rapidly shared the fate of the others, so that on the fifth day from the commencement of his task, he had, by weaving all these articles together in strips, into what is, by sailors, called "*twice-laid*," —completed a rope of tolerable strength, and of fourteen lengths, each length averaging about five feet.

As the only materials he now had at hand, to finish the rope, could not be used without attracting Ru's attention to their disappearance, St. Leu found it necessary to fix upon a night for making the contemplated attempt, purposing to attain the platform by means of the chimney, and thence, with the assistance of the rope, to descend into the great ditch, and gain the Seine through the small moat by which the former was fed.

He had no time to wait for a *favourable* opportunity, wherefore as the nights at that season were very long, and very dark, he chose the following evening—the sixth after his interview with Julie—though the difficulties that threatened him were materially augmented by the fact of a large quantity of snow having fallen, rendering a discovery by the sentinels more to be apprehended: the die, however, was cast; he had gone too far to recede, and delay might prove fatal to his project!

That day fled; but slowly; the night came, and waned—but more slowly still! would to-morrow never dawn? oh yes! the morrow came, and with it, snow and wind! noon-tide too passed, and still the snow fell, and the wind blew! night succeeded, with more snow and more wind! St. Leu watched the white flakes as they descended, and listened to the howling of the storm! the sound pleased him! seven o'clock struck; his heart leaped: the time he had so anxiously looked forward to had arrived.

As soon as Ru had paid him his last visit, St Leu took out the rope and examined it, length by length, subjecting it to the heaviest strain he was capable of, with a view to test its strength; the result proved satisfactory: to complete it was his next task, and to this he applied himself with an earnestness and an energy of purpose that the emergency increased tenfold. Every article in the cell, available as a substitute for yarn, now came into requisition: the sacking of his wretched couch—the old, and half-rotten green serge of the same that served for curtains—all that remained of his bedding, even to the tick of the matrass—his own outer garments—coat—waistcoat—neckerchief—every shred of raiment, was turned to account! He stationed himself near the narrow window of his cell, and listened as he worked to the chimes that marked the fleeting hours! eight o'clock—nine—ten! still his task remained incomplete! eleven struck—then midnight! another half hour and all would be ready! at last his work was done!

Having again assured himself of the strength of his rope, as far as the means for so doing would allow, he coiled it over his left arm, breathed a brief prayer, and with a firm heart commenced his perilous adventure.

With some difficulty, he forced his way up the narrow chimney as far as the elbow, where the obstruction existed which he had cleared away, as related in a former chapter: here, over his head, an iron-bar, similar to the one he had already bent aside, stopped his egress: however, he at last succeeded in removing it also, and soon gained the aperture above, which was scarcely large enough to afford

his body a passage—indeed, had he retained his clothes, he could not have got through it. He was rejoiced to find that the storm continued with unabated violence, and that the wind, which blew most boisterously, came from the north-east, placing him to leward of the sentinels. The night too was very black, though the snow that had fallen—and which still continued to drift blindingly in every direction, save straight down—rendered surrounding objects perfectly distinguishable, so that he could even plainly discern the sentry-boxes at the further end of the platform; one of these stood not forty feet from the aperture he lay concealed in, which, fortunately for him, was situated at the angle the tower of the Bertaudière formed with the masonry that connected it with the Bazinière, so that he could reconnoitre unperceived: the unlooked for circumstance startled him at first, but a few minutes sufficed to restore his courage, for he soon remarked that the sentinel had taken refuge within, leaving the road comparatively free: hardly daring to draw breath, he gradually emerged from his hiding-place, shivering and benumbed, and as the neighbouring clocks struck one, set his foot upon the platform: there was now no receding.

With the stealthiness of the cat, he crept on his hands and knees to the nearest embrasure, and, under cover of the piece of field-artillery with which it was furnished, proceeded to attach his rope to the wheel thereof, taking the precaution to cast the coil over the battlements, ready for use. This operation occupied some time, for his hands and limbs were not only chafed, swollen, and lacerated, but deadened from the effects of cold, so that he could hardly use them: at length, however, he completed his task in safety, and having ascertained that the rope was securely fastened, cautiously raised himself for the purpose of commencing his fearful descent, when the sentinel suddenly came out of his box and began parading the platform, passing backwards and forwards within twenty paces of the embrasure in which he now again lay crouched, a prey to the severest mental and bodily anguish that can be conceived.

Twice, when the vigilant guardian's back was turned, did St. Leu creep towards the embrasure, with the design of placing that barrier between them, and twice was he compelled to forego his intention, for the soldier's walk was so short, his face might be said to have been turned almost always one way: but hesitation now was madness, for the success of his attempt depended upon his decision and firmness; taking advantage therefore of the same favourable opportunity that had already twice offered itself, St. Leu bounded towards the battlement, when a fierce gust drove the blinding sleet and snow into the sentry's face, causing him to turn suddenly round: he caught sight of the strange figure before him—the click of the musket—the *qui-vive* told St. Leu that he was discovered. Dashing forwards—unarmed, naked, as he was—he grasped the man by the throat—and a short but desperate struggle ensued, during which the musket exploded: placing his foot in the middle of the soldier's body, he wrenched the weapon from his grasp, and swinging it over his head, with the butt-end laid

him senseless at his feet: the next moment, he hung suspended in the air: he had commenced his frightful descent!

Meanwhile, the other sentinels rushed to the succour of their comrade, but stupified by exposure to the inclement night, looked about for the fugitive in every direction—save the right one—discharging their pieces in the air, in order to rouse the garrison. The alarm now became general, though some time elapsed first, for the wind was so high, it drowned the vociferations of the soldiers on the towers—bawling out to their comrades on the round-away—who knew not where to look, nor what to do, until one of them perceived a white figure dangling in mid-way air, rapidly descending from the towers into the ditch, and at which he levelled his musket, and fired, but without effect, although it served to put his companions on the proper track.

St. Leu had by this time descended more than half way, but his position was frightful in the extreme; having nothing to steady his descent, he was swinging about backwards and forwards, in imminent danger of being dashed to pieces against the massive stone-work, and owed his safety only to his presence of mind, which he still retained, even at that critical juncture. His sole aim was to reach the ditch beneath him, which he saw was frozen over, for the snow laid thick upon the surface of the ice; he therefore continued lowering himself, heedless of the uproar, or of the strife of the elements that raged above, and around, and on all sides of him, his only fear being as to the strength of the rope, upon which the strain increased every moment, causing it now and then to crack, and reminding him of the frail materials that it was composed of, so vividly, that his fingers seemed to interrogate each thread, as if to ascertain the safety of that particular one on which his life was at that precise moment hung.

He had yet a distance of some twenty-five or thirty feet to descend, when to his utter dismay, he came to the end of his rope—and at the same instant he felt that somebody was pulling it above: a moment's hesitation—only a moment's—but what a moment that!—he loosed his hold and dropped! a rush of air—a suspension of breath—a stunning blow, a sensation of his bones being all broken at once—and the next instant he was immersed in water, and mud, and ice, and snow, and blinding darkness! But life—life—was his only thought, notwithstanding! He rose to the surface, and pushing aside the broken, jagged masses of ice, succeeded in gaining a footing upon a firmer part; he had, however, escaped one danger only to encounter another.

He was yet separated from the small moat, which he sought to gain, by the whole width of the great ditch, into which he had fallen, and the space between the Bertaudière and the Bazinière towers, a distance of nearly seventy yards, in traversing which his person would offer a sure mark to the sentinels on the round-away, who were now aware of his position; fortunately, however, the biting wind blew direct in their face, driving before it a shower of tiny, frozen arrows, that nearly deprived them of vision, the intolerable pain diverting their attention from the fugitive to themselves. St. Leu scrambled forwards on all-

fours—the ice cracking, and bending, and breaking under him, until he reached the middle of the great ditch, when a shot from one of the sentinels—for he was now within twenty yards of the round-away—took effect on his person, passing obliquely through the fleshy part of his arm. Regardless of the anguish, and of the additional danger to which he was now exposed, he started to his feet, bounded forwards, and reached the small moat.

This moat—which likewise formed the outer-most boundary of the gardens of the arsenal—communicated with the Seine, and was about forty feet wide, and of the same depth as the great ditch; over it, at about fourteen or fifteen yards from its point of junction with the latter, fell a triple draw-bridge, defended on the inner side by a corps-de-garde. Hearing the shots and the shouts of their comrades, the soldiers on duty here, lowered the bridge and rushed, in a mass, to the first outer court, in order to learn the cause of the outcry; they passed within twenty feet of the wounded and trembling fugitive, who, the better to conceal himself, crouched down into the snow; he saw them run across the bridge—and heard their halloos to their comrades—he heard too, the chains of the great draw-bridge clank, and its ponderous hinges grate—he could see the flash and flicker of their torches, and distinguish the hurried tramp of his pursuers' footsteps drawing every instant nearer and nearer; then, a shout of exultation—they were on his track—the snow had betrayed the direction he had taken!

Life—life—liberty—Julie! and again he rushed onwards—gasping—exhausted—another shout! they were nearer! another effort, and he could place the massive outer wall of the Bastile between them and him! On! on! on! over the rotting ice, or immersed in the gelid waters that it covered! now wading through them—now scrambling over the unsafe masses on its surface—or leaping and running when a footing offered; but still on—on—on!

St. Leu had now gained that portion of the smaller moat where it was traversed by the outer wall of the Bastile, a small arch of about five feet in length—the thickness of the wall—forming the junction between it and the moat of the arsenal gardens. But here—between him and his liberty—a formidable barrier interposed itself, in the shape of a harrow-formed grating, fixed into the arch and descending to within a foot of the water-mark, and at the bottom of which bristled a chevaux-de-frize: he hesitated: it was only for a moment: the voices, and the tramp of footsteps in his rear told him he was lost if he paused longer: he drew one long breath, burst through the rotten ice with his feet, and plunged! a long half-minute followed! a noise as of a thousand drums beating all at once, or of as many guns going off all at the same moment, filled his ears; still he groped on beneath the water, guiding himself by the bank—then his head touched a substance; with his last remnant of strength, he forced upwards—he breathed again—the last barrier was passed—he was free!

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PURSUIT.

Yes! free! Free as the dark masses of clouds that—pursued by the furious blast—rushed through the heavens above! Free as the unruly blast itself that drove them along: or as the broad flakes of snow that drifted, thick and fast, in every direction around him! But what cared he for those dark masses of clouds—or for the furious blast that drove them—or for the blinding snow they vomited! He could hold out his cheek to that furious blast, or let it buffet his exhausted, broken frame, and rejoice; nay, mock its rage; for, like it, he was free! Oh, no! he neither beheld darkness nor felt the cold! he thought not of his wounds—nor of the anguish he was suffering—nor of the dangers he had encountered—nor of the dangers that still remained to be encountered: his entire thoughts, his feelings, were all concentrated, all absorbed in the consciousness of one single truth: he was free!

Yes, free! but half-dead! exhausted by the immense exertions he had made! wounded—bruised—lacerated—benumbed! Gasping for breath, he dragged his almost powerless limbs to the shelving bank of the ditch, and with difficulty scrambled out of it, retaining, notwithstanding, sufficient presence of mind to keep him alive to the necessity of increasing, without delay, the distance already between him and his pursuers, who were separated from him only by the thickness of the outer wall of the Bastile, and whose voices he could distinctly hear rising in discordance above the howling of the tempest.

But before proceeding farther, it may be well to give some account of the proceedings of the garrison.

The alarm raised by the sentries on the platform, was soon communicated by those on the roundaway, to their comrades on duty in the outer *corps-de-gardes*, although the violent wind, whistling and roaring through the battlements and amongst the towers, almost drowned the voices that were striving to out-bellow it. Taking advantage of the confusion that reigned, St. Leu—as already stated—gained the small moat just as the draw-bridge over it was being lowered, and only for his promptitude in scrambling along the ditch whilst the guards were running wildly about the court-yard, he must infallibly have been discovered and taken by Corbé, who, with some of the garrison of *the interior*, had, on the first alarm, rushed out, and now led the way in pursuit of the fugitive; though, at his outset, *he* likewise experienced some delay, from the fact of the great draw-bridge—which was always raised at night on the retreat of the inner garrison—being still secured; but besides this, he had, afterwards, to cross the standing-bridge on which the former fell, as also the second outer

court, before he could attain the point whence the uproar appeared to proceed: these delays, trifling as they were, proved of the greatest importance to St. Leu, as they afforded him time to pass the guard-house that defended the passage of the triple draw-bridge thrown over the small moat by which he sought to escape; yet, notwithstanding his promptitude to profit by these delays, he had scarcely cleared the dangerous point mentioned, than Corbé rushed out of the guard-house straight into the first outer court, where he immediately became confounded in the group of bewildered soldiers already assembled there.

"He has escaped! he has escaped!" was the only cry that assailed his ears, and the only answer he could obtain to his hurried inquiries, as he pushed aside the guards, and strove to arrive at the truth.

"Who is it? who has escaped? does any body know which way he went?" shouted he, looking from one to the other.

"I saw him come down from the top of the Bertaudière," answered one: the sentinel who first fired at St. Leu, from the roundaway: "I wonder how he was'nt dashed to pieces!"

"Fools!" screamed Corbé, foaming with excitement, at the same time dashing the flaming torch into the face of the soldier nearest him; "a prisoner escaped! and ye all stand talking here! Why do ye not seek him? idiots! He cannot be far off! Follow me, some of you! let the others disperse and hunt about the court-yards!"

"He crossed the great ditch, in that direction," exclaimed a second sentinel, who, panting for breath, had only just joined his comrades: "I fired at him; but I must have missed him, for I saw him leap up, and run off like a scared rabbit!"

"Lead thou the way, then," replied the Lieutenant-Governor; "*morbleu!* thou should'st have been here before!" so saying, he himself rushed in advance of them all, in the direction of the small moat, to which the last speaker had pointed, nor was long ere he discovered that they were on the right track.

"He is wounded!" exclaimed he, exultingly, as he caught sight of the red stains on the surface of the snow; "see! see! there's his blood! huzza! huzza! he cannot escape this way! there is no issue! his foot-prints point yonder—towards the outer wall! that will stop him! Run, animals! run, for your lives! fifty crowns to him who captures the prisoner!" and with a multiplicity of impatient exclamations, intermingled with threats, promises and curses, Corbé set off again in the direction of the great outer wall which formed the extreme limit of the small moat, followed by his subordinates, whose shouts grew louder and more frequent as they drew nearer to the spot where they hoped to recapture their unhappy prisoner: they were, however, doomed to be disappointed, for St. Leu had already gained the other side in the desperate manner related.

Petrified with amazement, Corbé and his comrades stood for a few minutes looking at one another with blank countenances, scarcely able to credit the evidence of their senses, it seeming to them impossible that the fugitive could have found means to get beyond the formidable barrier at the end of the small moat where they at that moment

were: that he had done so, however, was incontrovertible, since no traces of him—according to the report of the scouts who now came up—could be discovered in any other direction than the one they had taken.

"Ye skulking babblers! scoundrels!" vociferated the Lieutenant-Governor, gnashing his teeth with rage; "what were ye all about to let him slip through your fingers thus? Were ye snoring at your post? or are ye still asleep? I tell you he cannot have escaped this way? he *must* be concealed somewhere near! Hunt again, hounds! scour the court-yards once more! look into every rat-hole; but find him, find him, or by the Host, I'll make ye repent it!"

"You may hang *me*, Monsieur, to-morrow-morning—aye, or now either, if you think it 'll do me any good," observed one of the group; "but I'll stake my life upon it, that if we hunted the court-yards through and through till this time to-morrow, we shouldn't have any better luck! I headed my comrades in the search, and I tell you he has escaped! that's all about it!"

"Perhaps he's under the arch, Lieutenant," exclaimed another, who had been exploring the banks of the small moat; "if he is," added he, in a lower tone of voice, "the devil himself must have lent him a hand to get there!"

"The ice is broken, close to the chevaux-de-frize," shouted a third, who, more venturesome than his companions, and excited moreover by the hope of gaining the promised recompense, had leaped into the ditch, and torch in hand, was reconnoitring the cavity in the ice by which St. Leu had in fact effected his escape.

"Is there water enough to drown him?" demanded Corbé, fiercely.

"Seven feet, if there's an inch, Lieutenant," responded the man in the ditch; "the Seine rose high before the frost set in!"

"Fire into the arch, some of you," again vociferated Corbé: "quick now! do ye hear?"

Some half dozen of the group hastened to obey the order of their superior, and thrusting the barrel of their muskets through the iron-grating, discharged them, downwards, into the arch.

"Well!" ejaculated Corbé, after a moment's pause.

The soldier in the ditch peered into the cavity, and shook his head.

"Is he dead?" asked the Lieutenant-Governor.

"There's no one there, dead or alive," responded the man: "he's either drowned, or he has escaped: how—I won't pretend to say!"

"My everlasting curse upon ye all for this," shouted Corbé, pale with passion and disappointment, "I'll hang every one of you, I will, to teach your comrades vigilance! A pack of prating, noisy fools as ye are! old women would have done their duty better! Could ye only chatter; and howl; and ask one another questions; and look frightened? What use was bellowing? unless to afford the prisoner more time to escape! Had ye been only half as nimble on your legs as with your tongue, he could not have passed the bridge! But I'll make ye repent it, I will! Back to your posts, every one! no! two of you remain here! if he has crept through the arch—though

I don't think that possible, he cannot be very far off! so keep a sharp look out on this side, whilst I hasten round to the other!" and with this he departed, closely followed by the soldiers who had joined in the pursuit.

Fortunately for the fugitive, he had crept out of the ditch before his pursuers discharged their muskets into the arch, or he must infallibly have been wounded a second time; perhaps killed: the report however, not only warned him of the new danger that he had been so unexpectedly exposed to, but rendered him alive to another, to avoid which, he found himself compelled to abandon his original plan of escape, and adopt another.

It happened luckily that he did so, and ultimately proved the means of ensuring his safety; for, had he carried out his primitive intention of gaining the Seine by following the direction of the moat, he would either have been re-captured by Corbé's party, or by the sentinels on duty at the Arsenal, who, roused by the report of fire-arms so near to them, were now all on the alert, and on the arrival of the messengers from the Bastile, headed by the Lieutenant-Governor, began scouring the gardens in every direction, effectually blockading every issue by which escape was practicable, and amongst these, the extremity of the small moat at its point of junction with the river. Finding his retreat cut off, and his footsteps so closely tracked, St. Leu roused himself from the lethargy that he felt to be fast stealing over him, and which loss of blood and exposure to the inclement night had induced, and determined upon making one last and desperate effort for his liberty: his resolution taken, he at once re-commenced his flight in the direction of the *boulevard extérieur*.

Meanwhile the tempest continued to rage with unmitigated fury; but though the wind howled, and whistled, and dashed the snow about more angrily than ever, St. Leu courageously buffeted his way through it all, now stopping short to listen whether any one was in pursuit of him, then rushing forwards again with renewed courage though with diminishing strength, vainly looking towards the distant houses for a glimmer of light, that he might turn his footsteps thither, in the hope of securing a temporary asylum from his foes.

At length he reached one of the earthen mounds that had been thrown up to form the outworks or bulwarks of the fortress: it was the last boundary that divided it from the faubourg, and as it commanded a more extensive view, he ventured to scramble up to its summit, in order to reconnoitre; to his terror he beheld that his enemies were already on his last track, having discovered his foot-prints in the snow: he saw their flaming torches waving in the air, and caught the sound of their voices intermingling with the hoarse bellowing of the wind: he could plainly distinguish their fierce gestures of exultation, and almost their features, as the lurid light glared and flashed fitfully upon their dark forms. For a moment, despair took possession of his heart: he stood completely paralyzed, and with suspended breath and vacant eye, watched them as they drew nearer, and nearer, and nearer the spot to which he was riveted!

All was lost! all that he had done—all that he had suffered was useless! that liberty he had so deeply sighed after would then again be snatched from him at the very moment he believed it secured! once more a horrid dungeon would receive him within its stony arms; nor air, nor light, nor sun, nor sky be his! Was there no hope? no chance? Yes! one! only one! he remembered the *faubourg*, with its dark streets, and short turnings, and isolated buildings! could he gain *it*, he might yet baffle his pursuers, for there, perhaps, he might find a temporary asylum! One more look at his enemies! they were still some distance in his rear; (he would rather have been in theirs;) but a very short time would suffice them to come up with him! and the only advantage he possessed, one false step, a moment's irresolution might destroy! yet, this advantage, poor though it was, he durst not sacrifice! it had cost him too much!

There was no time for reflection: his heart throbbed wildly—his head swam—he saw nothing, heard nothing—he only felt himself suddenly borne along as it were upon the wind—impelled onwards, onwards, he knew not how—leaping—stumbling—scrambling—running, but still onwards—watching the white earth as it glided beneath his feet—or noting the dark rows of trees as with the speed of lightning they rushed past him—or now, the narrow portals of the houses, as he wildly interrogates each, in the hope of finding one open! But no! all, all are shut against the fugitive!

He dashes wildly onwards notwithstanding; up one street; down another; through *carrefours** and courts, and lanes, and alleys, threading a labyrinth of stone and brick apparently interminable! suddenly a bright stream of light bursts full upon him as he turns a corner! a bound brings him to the door whence it proceeds! another moment: he has disappeared: the friendly porch is closed, and all is darkness again; with the wind whistling, and roaring, and venting its rage upon the tall stacks of chimneys—carrying away slates and tiles, and roofs, as though they were straws—mischievously drifting the snow under street-doors, into cellars, down chimney-pots, and through the broken panes of the poor man's dwelling; causing the sickly wife to shiver beneath the scanty coverlet, and her affrighted infants to huddle closer together, and hide their heads beneath the bed-clothes in search of warmth: clattering and knocking fiercely but vainly for admittance at the rich man's well-secured windows, awaking him from his first sleep, with a loud curse in his mouth against the disturber of his rest: making old women to count their beads and mumble predictions; sailors to think of God and pray; and the benighted way-farer to crouch down any where to shelter himself from its fury; but reckless of every thing, continuing its mad career, until lulled by a voice that whispers, "*Peace! be still!*"

It is not here the place to decide whether or not there exists in

* A *carrefour* is the point of junction of many streets, the nearest approach to which is that part of London called the SEVEN DIALS.

this sub-lunar or sub-solar sphere, in connexion with the fortunes of man, a certain mysterious agency, called fate; that is, a predestinated concatenation of events, whose influence, for some wise end—though often apparently otherwise—tends to render an individual irresponsible for his deeds, in making him, unconsciously, the instrument of some Great Power of infinite and ubiquitous volition; it is not here the place, say we, to decide a question involving, as *it* does, so much severe inquiry; but it is, notwithstanding, incontrovertible—whether fatality be or not admitted to enter into the organization of mundane affairs—that the regulation of the stupendous machinery of Nature—including, of course, man and his actions—is effected by the very simplest means, and that the fate of empires, as of individuals, oftentimes hangs upon a circumstance so trivial, as even to escape notice, until investigation shows the secret workings of that agency to which we yet hesitate to give a name!

Now, though we will not, in the present state of this important question, take upon ourselves to assert positively, that every thing that happened to St. Leu on the night mentioned was fore-ordained to happen, we will yet confess, the bias of our opinion inclines towards a belief that something like fate certainly had a hand in the transaction, and that the tiny angel appointed to watch over our hero's particular destiny, had, for some length of time beforehand, been plotting and weaving a very complicated train of minor incidents expressly for the purpose of assisting its *protegé* when the season for so doing arrived; preferring this quiet way of obliging him, to adopting more violent means, or showing its power openly; in order to leave its charge under the agreeable impression of owing his escape to the wonderful personal exertions he had himself undergone to effect it.

As, however, we feel averse to promulgate any opinion of our own without adducing something like a reason for entertaining it, we will take the present opportunity of observing, that if St. Leu had not been predestined to escape, he would either have chosen another night to make the attempt, and been frustrated—or on the night in question have been captured by the sentinel on the platform—or shot dead by those who fired on him—or broken his bones when he loosed his hold of the rope—or drowned in the moat—or taken by Corbé and his party at the outer wall—or, finally, not have found a refuge at the very nick of time—which latter event *did* occur, whilst the foregoing ones did *not*: and we will further add, with reference to the influence of trifles upon a man's destiny, that St. Leu was indebted solely to a very trivial circumstance, for the asylum he found from his pursuers, for, had the owner thereof — a smith and farrier—not had a neighbour of the same trade as himself, and with whom—according to the old adage—he was not upon over-fraternal terms—he would that very morning have refused an order for eight and forty sets of horse-shoes, on the plea of inability to forge and deliver them by the next day, as required; had he done which, there would have been no necessity for his working until two hours after

midnight, and consequently none for keeping the fire burning that first attracted St. Leu's attention.

But it so fell out—in accordance with the secret arrangements of the tiny angel who held St. Leu's destiny in his hands—that Jean Bourliquet — this was the smith's name, though Democritus had christened him by that of Vulcan—felt a great dis-inclination to allow his neighbour the benefit of the order for the horse-shoes, wherefore he took it himself, promising to deliver them at the appointed time, and forthwith commenced his task in right earnest; for he had his work to get them done. All day he wrought with untiring perseverance; night fell, and his ponderous hammer still rung loud and merrily upon the anvil, whilst his furnace seemed to burn brighter and brighter; at their usual hour, his neighbours retired to bed, leaving him still at work; the patrol passed his forge at midnight, and with a "*good night, comrade,*" and a rough compliment upon his industry, left him hammering away, might and main, heedless of the fierce hurricane, and of the masses of snow, which, drifting from every quarter, forced themselves through the crevices and the open door of his shed.

"Thou hast wrought well to-day, Jean Bourliquet," exclaimed he, soliloquizing, and seizing with his tongs another bar of iron; "and thou wilt be a few crowns the richer for it to-morrow! Come! since thou art in the humour, thou may'st as well finish the job to-night, for thy father's first maxim to thee, when he was teaching thee thy calling, was: '*always strike the iron whilst 'tis hot,*' Jean Bourliquet:" so saying, the burly smith thrust the iron-bar into the furnace, and having heaped a quantity of fuel over it, began pulling the rope of the forge-bellows.

The fire, half smothered beneath a load of fine coals and ashes, immediately began throwing out two or three tiny jets of blue flame, streaked with yellow and white; these were soon followed by a multitude of brilliant sparks, which shot upwards with cheerful crackle, and fell again like a shower of stars, in every direction around; the fiery mass gradually becoming redder and redder, until it had entirely ignited, except one solitary black place in the middle, where the iron-bar lay, apparently yet intact: then Jean Bourliquet—whistling a snatch of some well-known air—raked the live embers closer together, threw on more coals, and cunningly moistened the fresh combustibles by dousing them with a ladleful or two of water, plying the bellows with renewed vigour: again did the blue flames shoot up, and the sparks snap and crackle as the fire gained strength—now growing red as the smith fed and blew, now, as he damped it, again turning black, but only to burst forth the next minute with increased fierceness; at length, it almost ceased to throw out flames and sparks, though the dull red glare of the burning heap continued to increase in intensity and vividness until it attained a blinding whiteness, when the smith discontinued whistling, and withdrew the iron-bar from the furnace, all sparkling and hissing, and nearly fused; laying it down on the anvil, he seized his ponderous hammer with his other hand, and was

intent upon beating the red metal into the requisite form, when a naked figure rushed, or more properly speaking, leaped into the shed, and darting into the furthermost corner, where he sunk exhausted, exclaimed in an almost inaudible voice:

"Save me! I have escaped from the Bastile! I am pursued!"

Now, the honest smith did not belong to that self-righteous class of beings, who, regulating their actions by certain fixed principles of their own, keep their charity so closely buttoned up, that it never gets an opportunity of peeping out and exercising itself; wherefore, on hearing this appeal, he neither hesitated to consider how he should act, nor expressed any surprise at the stranger's request—although it must be confessed his sudden entry startled him—nor thought of the consequences that secreting a state prisoner would entail if he were discovered in the fact; all which he would have done if his charity had been of that sickly nature so common amongst men—and which is, perhaps, the reason why they keep it so much at home—but perceiving at a glance how matters stood, and that time was precious, and the case urgent, he threw down hammer, tongs, and half-finished horse-shoe, and making a sign to the prostrate man, promptly closed the door of his shed, and secured it inside, by dropping across it the two massive bars that formed its ordinary fastening: this done, he smiled, nodding his head very knowingly, and turned his attention to the stranger.

"Take a drink of this, comrade," said he, snatching off from a shelf a large wicker-flask, containing something more than a pint of brandy, and placing the same in the fugitive's hand; "that 'll revive thee if any thing will; I can answer for its virtue."

"Conceal me somewhere;" replied St. Leu—for the Reader has already guessed the stranger's name—"they are close upon me; if they find me here we shall both be lost."

"Take another drink," coolly observed the smith; "for should they track thee, thou wilt require all the courage thou hast yet left."

St. Leu did as he was desired, and returned the flask, which Bourliquet carried to his own mouth, and after taking two or three long draughts, deposited it on a bench by his side:

"There!" said he, smacking his lips; "now let us consider what we had best do."

"Hast thou no place in which thou canst secrete me, friend?" asked St. Leu, starting to his feet, "here I am not safe."

"I have no other asylum to offer thee," responded the smith; "except, indeed, the room above, which thy *friends* would be sure to search if they came: thou must assist thyself or I can do nothing more for thee."

"Tell me what to do," ejaculated our hero, whose strength was now partially renovated; "I am a soldier; thou shalt not find me deficient in courage."

"*Diantre!*" exclaimed Bourliquet; "hadst thou not possessed that, thou wouldst not have escaped from yonder! Hast thou any strength left?"

"I have lost a good deal of blood," replied St. Leu, holding out his wounded arm; "but I can yet make an effort."

"What! wounded!" cried the smith, now for the first time remarking the fact; "why didst thou not say so at first? here, let me bandage thy arm."

With a dexterity that savoured strongly of extensive practise, though his skill was ordinarily exercised upon quadrupeds only, Bourliquet bound up the maimed limb, applying to the wound a few drops of a kind of balsam that he usually employed as a specific for hemorrhage in horses and cattle, and the potency of which made his patient wince:

"Ah! ah!" he exclaimed, noticing the young man's shudder, "it bites, eh? but thou wilt not feel it presently: there's nothing like that balsam for healing wounds or stopping bleedings: my old father discovered it years ago, and left me the secret and this forge for a patrimony! Hulloa!" continued he, in a lower tone of voice, at the same moment turning his head sharply round and looking towards the door: "what's that? didst thou hear any thing?"

"I did!" ejaculated St. Leu; "I heard voices! my pursuers have tracked me hither; what is to be done?"

"Why! we must make the best use of our senses, and gain as much time as possible! Be cool, comrade! if there should be danger, Jean Bourliquet is not the man to abandon a friend in the midst of it. We must 'nt appear to have been doctoring though," added he, restoring to its proper place every article he had used in the course of the recent operation; "that would at once excite suspicion!"

"Hush!" whispered St. Leu. whose ear was alive to every sound; "they are drawing nearer! I heard them shout again!"

"Pull the rope of yonder bellows, comrade," observed Bourliquet, in a brief, determined tone; "I shall rejoin thee in a twinkling! Should any one knock, open not; for thy life!" with this he commenced rapidly ascending a ladder that stood in the furthermost corner of the shed, and soon after disappeared through a trap cut through the rafters, and by which it communicated with a chamber above.

The tenement in which our hero had taken refuge was the first of a long row of quaintly fashioned houses, built partly of wood and partly of brick, extending from one end of the exterior boulevard, to some distance up the faubourg. It was perfectly isolated from the rest, being merely a very roomy shed, with a high triangular roof, from the centre of which projected one small latticed window, intended to admit a glimmer of light into a kind of cock-loft over the laboratory, forming the smith's dormitory. The laboratory itself was spacious, owning only one door, looking into the street, but that one very tall and very wide, and divided cross-wise, into two flaps, the lower of which was generally kept closed, whilst the upper one was left to swing backwards and forwards as it listed, being moreover ornamented on the outside with some two or three horse-shoes, intended to operate as a terror and a warning to the whole tribe of

evil spirits; who, from time immemorial—as is well known—have been reputed to hold horse-shoes in abhorrence.*

To the left, on entering, stood the blacksmith's forge, with its wide projecting chimney, and its blazing furnace, and on one side of which might now be seen, St. Leu, pale, haggard, and trembling, plying the bellows and feeding the fire, with the handiness of Maitre Bourliquet himself. At the other end, opposite the door, lay a quantity of litter and saw dust, trodden down into a close, compact mass, by the farrier's four-footed patrons, with here and there a number of halters hanging upon hooks firmly fixed into the brick work; vices and anvils of various sizes occupied a prominent position in the fore-ground, by the side of which were strewn hammers, pincers, tongs, pigs of iron, lumps of coal, clinkers, pieces of wood, ends of rope, files, curry-combs, iron-hoops, old horse-shoes, and a heap of the latter articles newly manufactured; the result of Bourliquet's day's work: two or three rows of shelves closely crammed with a multiplicity of stone-jars and glass-bottles variously labelled—a pail of dirty water—an old table, that for the colour of it might have passed for iron—and a long, low, wooden bench, across which a horse-cloth was carelessly thrown—filled up the space to the right: the whole place was redolent of burnt hoof and singed hair, and perfectly innocent of white-wash or paint—the rafters remained exposed to view in all their primitive rudeness—whilst the homely lamp—a piece of oakum steeped in oil or fat of some kind, and thrust into an iron saucer—sputtered and flared, and shed a dull, smoky light around, that only deepened the prevailing gloom.

St. Leu noted every thing at a glance, listening to the smith's heavy shuffle over-head as he began rummaging about in different corners, apparently in search of something, and at the same time to the

* We must here observe, that an ancient French Chronicler traces the origin of this superstitious custom, up to the youthful days of a certain saint—Eloi by name—a native of Cadillac, near Limoges, in Poitou, who flourished about the commencement of the seventh century, and being by trade a black-smith and farrier, fixed a horse-shoe over the door of his shed, as a sign of his craft. The sanctity of his life shed lustre over the horse-shoe, which, in course of time, acquired miraculous potency in settling the terrestrial affairs of witches, ghosts, and other disembodied beings. His fame spread far and wide until it reached the ears of the good King Dagobert, who elevated him to the Bishopric of Noyon; in return for which honour the great saint considerately undertook the office of correcting sundry irregularities in the costume of his Majesty, whose name in connexion with his eccentricity in the mode of adjusting a certain unmentionable garment has been handed down to posterity in the following lines. We would give the bard's effusion in our own vernacular tongue, could we do so without destroying their extreme simplicity and point: they run thus:

" *Le bon roy Dagobert,*
" *Mettoit sa culotte à l'envers—*
" *Le grand Saint Eloy, lui dit ô mon roy!*
" *Votre Majesté s'est bien mal culottée—*
" *S'est vrai lui dit le roy,*
" *Nous allons la mettre à l'endroit!*"

The *real, original, identical* horse-shoe used by the Saint, is actually in the possession of a vast number of the craft in various towns on the Continent, which fact we take to be a decided proof of the miraculous virtue it still possesses.

shouts of his pursuers, which had now grown fainter: this, however, was a mere delusion, for after a brief pause, they burst forth more vociferously than ever, and evidently much nearer—then came a hurried tramp of footsteps, and the next minute the glare of torches flickering through the crevices of the door: a short consultation followed; then a knocking, whilst a voice, which he recognized as belonging to Corbé, exclaimed:

"Open! in the name of the king!"

St. Leu looked anxiously towards the ladder, hardly daring to breathe, and trembling lest that the party outside should force an entrance: still he spoke not: another pause succeeded, when the knocking was repeated, as also the command, but with the addition of an oath: at this moment Bourliquet appeared at the trap, carrying in one hand a pair of wooden shoes which he threw down on the litter, as also a bundle of clothes, and making a sign to his guest to put them on, advanced to take his place at the forge:

"Quick! quick!" said he in a whisper; "never mind their being a little too large!" and he began blowing the fire, and singing at the very top of his voice, whilst St. Leu hurried on the garments.

These belonged to Maitre Bourliquet himself, and though many sizes too big for their present wearer, only served the better to disguise him; he dragged them on as fast as he could, the busy smith eyeing him the while with great calmness of demeanour: but here the knocking re-commenced more furiously than ever, accompanied by loud and angry threats:

"*The good King Dagobert! tral, la la la la la la la—a—!*" shouted Bourliquet, lengthening the final letter of the burden of his ditty, and beginning to hammer away upon his anvil—continuing in an under tone to St. Leu; "quick, comrade! they're getting impatient!"

"I am ready!" answered his guest, in a brief, sharp tone.

"*The great Saint Eloy, tral lal la lal lal la—!*" sang Bourliquet; and regardless of the attempts that the party outside were now making to break in the door, he continued to thump the anvil with all his might; pointing out a dingy *blouse* that laid in one corner, he signed to St. Leu to put it on; this was soon done:

"That 'll do, comrade!" he exclaimed in a whisper; "take my place at the bellows; and oblige me by looking as stupid as thou canst! Ah! stop! that white face of thine, and that long hair will betray us!" with this he snatched off the great fur cap which ornamented his own head, and clapped it on the young man's—at the imminent risk of extinguishing him—having, however, first adopted the precaution of turning up his unshorn, matted locks beneath it: taking next a handful of soot from one side of the chimney, he begrimed St. Leu's face with it, and his hands, nearly suffocating him by the operation, which, so completely disfigured him, that even Bourliquet himself opened his eyes with astonishment.

Meanwhile, finding themselves frustrated, the party headed by Corbé ceased their efforts to burst in the door, but taking advantage of the momentary silence within, the latter once more began knocking, crying out:

"Open, I say! don't you hear! open! open! Maitre Bourliquet!"

"Hulloa! hulloa!" shouted the smith, grasping St. Leu's hand by way of encouraging him; "who's there?"

"Open! in the name of the King!" answered Corbé!

"Oh! very well!" responded Bourliquet; "I don't know why I should 'nt;" and leaving St. Leu attending the furnace and plying the bellows, he unfastened the upper flap of the door, and confronted the intruders.

"Dids't thou not hear us demand admittance, before?" asked Corbé, looking fiercely at the smith; "we knocked loud enough!"

"I did hear a noise to be sure," replied Bourliquet, "but there's such a wind! I'm sorry I kept you waiting! What's the matter?"

"A prisoner has escaped from the Bastile," observed the Lieutenant-Governor.

"Indeed!" resumed the smith: "well! there's plenty left! she won't be missed I am sure!"

"We must search these premises," retorted Corbé, looking suspiciously into the shed; "we have traced the prisoner to thy door!"

"Ah, bah!" ejaculated Bourliquet, as though astonished at the prisoner's temerity.

"No trifling!" growled the first speaker; "I tell thee we have tracked him hither! let us in!"

"Well," said the smith, "if he got in here, I suppose he's here now! that's all! come in!—Pierre!"—this was addressed to St. Leu—"take the lamp and shew the gentlemen up the trap."

"There's no occasion, friend;" responded Corbé, casting a quick, doubtful glance in the direction of the ladder; "we can find our way up alone, I dare say!"

"As you please, Monsieur," responded Bourliquet. "Blow away, Pierre!"

Pierre did as he was desired; the smith withdrew the heated bar from the furnace and recommenced hammering, whilst Corbé, accompanied by two of his subordinates, began his search: they examined every nook and corner of the shed—looking under the bench—under the forge, which had a place there for coals—and amongst the straw and litter; finding no one, they mounted the ladder, but after a brief absence — which to the party most interested seemed an age—returned to the shed, with disappointment depicted on their countenances.

"Well!" exclaimed Bourliquet.

"He has escaped! by heaven!" muttered Corbé; "and yet I could swear I saw him fly in the direction of this shed! Hast thou no other place where he could secrete himself, fellow?"

"There's the roof," coolly observed the smith, clenching his hammer very tightly. "Pierre! throw some water on the fire!"

The Lieutenant-Governor frowned hideously, and bit his lip, staring very hard at Bourliquet; as Bourliquet, however, was accustomed to look at iron, he returned his gaze without the smallest sign of dis-

It took exposure to persuasion to which he was not brought up

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composure. Corbé then looked equally hard at St. Leu, whose face was now turned towards him—but did not recognize him, so effectually were his features disfigured; for, encouraged by the success of their artifice, and remembering the smith's request, he stared at Corbé with open mouth, and with such an idiotic expression of countenance, that Corbé himself was the first to turn away, uttering a compliment ending in the term "*imbecile.*"

After a moment's consultation with the sub-officer who had accompanied him, he again addressed the smith.

"To prevent the prisoner escaping, should he still be concealed any where about thy premises, two sentinels shall remain on duty here, all night, Maitre Bourliquet! If thou hast deceived me, thou shalt rue it!"

"Is there no other house but mine then, where he may have taken refuge?" asked Bourliquet: "you had better look a little further."

"No! here we have lost all traces of him! Comrades, we will return to the Bastile and report to St. Marc! Good night, Maitre Bourliquet."

"'Tis very cold, Monsieur," observed the smith, taking up the bottle, and presenting it to Corbé: "if you have no objection—I can recommend that!"

"Come! thou art an honest fellow I must confess," responded he, nodding to the burly artizan; "and I thank thee!" so saying he raised the vessel to his lips, and after holding it there awhile, restored it to the owner, with the tears starting from his eyes.

Returning Corbé's nod, and wishing him good health, Bourliquet drew his hand across the mouth of the flask, and in turn conveyed it to his own lips; when he had drunk enough, he wiped it a second time, and handed it to St. Leu:

"Take a good sup, Pierre," said he; "thou hast worked well today, which is more than I can say of thee at all times! I beg pardon, Monsieur," continued he to Corbé, who was drawing up his men, prior to leaving; "might I beg a favour—"

"Speak!" replied the latter.

"Why, you see, Monsieur, the Porte St. Antoine is closed for the night; but my mate, here—I kept him to help me finish a job—lives in the Rue St. Antoine—"

"I understand!" replied Corbé: "thou would'st have me pass him? willingly! but we have no time to spare!"

"Dost hear, Pierre?" exclaimed Bourliquet; "Monsieur will see thee thro' the gate! I don't want thee any more! so good night!"

Whatever were St. Leu's feelings at the thought of thrusting himself into the very midst of his enemies, he at once perceived the advantages of the proposed step, the boldness of which almost guaranteed its success; responding to the smith's good night, in an under tone, he grasped him tightly by the hand, and prepared to follow Corbé, who, having posted the sentinels, made the remainder of his men fall in, and bawling out—"*bonne nuit, Maitre Bourliquet,*" gave the word "*march!*" in another minute they were out of sight.

But long after, the smith's song was heard to rise above the clang of his hammer as it fell upon the anvil, whilst the flask, replenished from some secret store, performed many journies to and fro' from his hands to those of the sentinels outside, who having emptied it for the second time, assured Maitre Bourliquet that they entertained great esteem for him, individually, and wished—though they should not like their wish to be made public—that a prisoner might escape from the Bastile every night, if it would procure them the pleasure of mounting guard at his door.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

D'ARGENSON, IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY, PEEPS INTO THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HIS MOST CHRISTIAN MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS, AND OBTAINS POSSESSION OF A SECRET OR TWO WORTH KNOWING.

In the mean while the endeavours of the Lieutenant of Police to discover Jeanne de St. Auney's retreat, utterly failed; for although he succeeded in tracking her from the Convent of the Sisters *de la Madeleine du Trainel* back to her own home, all further traces of her were here lost; nor could he elicit either from Prevôt or old Antoine—who now remained the only inhabitants of the house—the slightest clue to the place whither she had been conveyed; Jacques having—in anticipation of the inquiry—adopted the salutary precaution of not informing them of his intention; finding his efforts frustrated in this quarter, D'Argenson, after subjecting the Baron's domicile to a strict search, took possession of it in the King's name, leaving two of his creatures in charge thereof, with secret orders to note every circumstance that transpired, and forthwith report the same: nothing, however, occurred worth mentioning, except St. Marcel's visit, which was duly communicated, so that from that period up to the time when he is again introduced to the Reader—a lapse of one month—he had not progressed one step in the discovery.

It may, at first sight, appear unaccountable, that the spy should select the Carmelites as the best and surest refuge for Jeanne, and perhaps induce a supposition of his not having acted, in this instance, with the judgment which ordinarily characterized his movements; for this convent, it will be remembered, was in the immediate vicinity of her late dwelling, and D'Argenson, moreover, occasionally visited it in secret, assuming the garb of a capuchin, in order not to excite notice, which latter circumstance was not only known to Jacques, but had already once provoked his sarcasms; though, in justice to the holy sisterhood be it said, those sarcasms were unmerited. So far, however, from acting unwisely, or incautiously, the spy displayed consummate policy in adopting this course, experience having taught him that a fugitive is scarcely ever safer from his enemies than when

he casts himself, headlong, into the very midst of them; the boldness of the step shielding him from suspicion; and more than this, he knew that Jeanne, being of age, and having, by his advice, personally claimed the protection of the church, no secular authority could compel her to quit the sanctuary she had voluntarily sought, unless she first empowered that secular authority to claim her: thus she was doubly secure; and even in the event of the Lieutenant of Police discovering her—a circumstance not impossible—might boldly set him and his power at defiance.

But beside Jeanne de St. Auney, there existed another person who engrossed no inconsiderable share of D'Argenson's thoughts; this was Father Pierre Simon, who still eluded pursuit, in spite of every effort made to apprehend him.

It will be remembered that at the period when this tale opened, the attention of the Lieutenant of Police was already directed to the circumstance of an unknown capuchin having recently been remarked, at different times, lurking about in various parts of the city; this fact had sufficed to render him an object of suspicion, and spies were in consequence immediately sent out in quest of him, with a view to ascertain his business; strange to say, however, he evaded them all, a fact that increased the unfavourable surmises already entertained of him, and rendered D'Argenson more eager to ensnare him; but finding that his ordinary emissaries failed, he next commissioned his confidential agent, Jacques, to watch the stranger's movements, calculating upon his adroitness to discover the latter's retreat, and the motives of his visit to the capital.

Now it so happened that the spy was at this precise period not only already acquainted with the secret project that had brought the capuchin to Paris, but pledged, to certain parties, to assist him in the accomplishment thereof, and to withhold the affair from D'Argenson, lest, to gratify his malice, and at the same time increase his credit with the King—whom they wished to keep in ignorance of their intentions until success was no longer doubtful—he should be tempted to divulge what he knew of the transaction, and thus become the means of frustrating their plans.

Under these circumstances, it may be imagined, that Jacques readily fell into D'Argenson's views, and soon found a way of turning his position between the rival parties to his own account, serving the one to the utmost extent of his power, and cajoling the other with all manner of reports on the score of the capuchin's movements, so that for a whole month he contrived to keep his employer completely in the dark, whilst, by colouring his information with a shadow of truth—but only a shadow—he did not even excite a suspicion of the deceit he was practising upon him.

At this critical juncture, and whilst matters were still in this position, Jacques was first introduced to the Reader, who is aware of the nature of the circumstances that subsequently arose to excite D'Argenson's suspicions of his emissary's sincerity, the consequence of which awkward discovery was a determination on the part of the

former to arrest the monk without further delay; but in this instance again did the spy counteract his design; and from that time the capuchin was no where to be found, nor could D'Argenson, with all his cunning, and in spite of the efforts he made, succeed in discovering the holy father's retreat, though he ascertained the important fact of his being concealed somewhere in the capital: however, nowise discouraged by ill success, he redoubled his exertions, pursuing his object with a tenacity and a resolution worthy of a better purpose.

Some days—a fortnight perhaps—after his late visit to the Bastile, he might have been seen, early one morning, seated in a small closet situated on the ground floor of the establishment called the "*Bureau de la Poste*," very busily engaged in sorting and examining a number of letters that laid in a heap upon a small table before him.

The room itself was very dark, for it had no window, and was called the *cabinet noir*; less perhaps on account of its obscurity—though it was obscure enough, in all conscience—than of the nature of the business carried on therein; it was likewise exceedingly bare of furniture, possessing but one chair and the table already mentioned; long black cobwebs, covered with dust, hung about from the ceiling, and in the corners—long since deserted by their noisome occupants—one or two of which still dangled from them by the legs, shrivelled up into skin, and spinning round and round at the slightest breath of air that stirred; in the middle of the chamber stood an iron tripod, upholding a small brasier, filled with live charcoal; in one corner, near the chimney, was strewn a number of opened letters, and on a shelf, fixed into the wall, were arranged, ready for immediate service, a variety of seals, of different kinds and devices, with a few sticks of coloured wax, and a box containing a composition of the consistence of putty, a piece of which, an individual who stood behind D'Argenson had just pinched off, and was now kneading in the hollow of his hand. On the table, burnt a small oil lamp, by the side of which lay a book, in which the Lieutenant of Police occasionally wrote a remark or two, as he set apart for examination certain epistles whose superscription appeared to interest him more particularly than the others.

Several of these had already undergone inspection, the process of breaking open the seals and re-adjusting them being performed with considerable dexterity by the individual in waiting—a tall, lean man, with pinched-up features, sallow complexion, and sandy hair—who, though perfectly *au fait* to the scandalous business in which he was engaged, did not appear to take especial delight therein; whilst his superior seemed, on the contrary, beyond measure pleased with the result of their labours, bestowing, every now and then, a look of satisfaction upon his subordinate, and chuckling to himself and rubbing his bony hands together, in the exuberance of his glee, whenever a disclosure of particular moment fell under his observation.

"Ah! ah!" exclaimed he in a tone of self-approbation, after a long pause that had followed one of his fits of merriment, and at the same time seizing a fresh packet of letters; "it was lucky I saved thee from the rope, friend Grumeaud!" here he untied the bundle.

The man behind him started, but remarking that his superior did not go on, replied in a husky voice, that "it *was, very* lucky—and that he felt very much obliged to him for the favour."

"But I *can* hang thee, *yet;* remember that!" continued the first speaker, sorting and casting several letters aside, and taking no notice of his subordinate's answer.

The man said "he *would* remember it!"

"I don't promise thee I *will* do it; mind!" resumed his employer —who was in a very facetious humour—"for I value thy services; but I expect thee to maintain strict secresy on the score of thy occupation; or—*morbleu!*"

Grumeaud in reply muttered a few words to the effect that *he*—meaning D'Argenson—needn't be afraid.

The latter here commenced turning over the leaves of his book, still keeping up the colloquy with his subordinate.

"I said 'twas lucky I saved thee from the gallows;" remarked he; "and so it was; for had'st thou been hanged, friend Grumeaud, I could not have turned thy genius to account."

Upon this, the individual bowed to the back of the Lieutenant's beaver, and trying to smile, began expressing his satisfaction at the circumstance of having, at length, found one who could appreciate his *genius;* he was, however, interrupted by the Lieutenant:

"I like to give every man his due," said he; "and I cannot deny but that thou *hast* genius, Grumeaud! 'Tis to it I am indebted for the idea of the system I have established of—" here he stopped short, and breaking open a letter, began reading it; when he had finished, he made an entry in his register, and cast the letter into the brasier, in a very business-like manner.

"What first put it into thy head to exercise thy ingenuity in this way?" asked the Lieutenant of Police, taking a newly manufactured seal from his colleague, and stamping with it one of the letters, which having perused, he had now refolded.

"Poverty; a small salary, and a large family," answered Grumeaud, in a choked voice.

"Ah!" resumed the other, examining the new impression with much apparent satisfaction; "honesty is always the best policy, friend Grumeaud! But thou hast nothing to complain of now; eh?"

"The *pay* is good enough, Monseigneur," replied the man; "but—

"But—but what!" exclaimed his employer, after a pause, expecting the other to continue.

"The work is dirty;" continued Grumeaud, hesitatingly, as if afraid that he had gone too far.

"Yes! it is," coolly observed D'Argenson; "the hangman's is scarcely dirtier. When thou art tired of it, however, let me know! thou hast a choice, remember!"

"Say no more, Monseigneur;" resumed the man, trembling, and turning pallid at the allusion; "you shall not have reason to complain of me! I owe you my life, and my children's bread! that is enough!"

"Yes! and I intend to promote thee," remarked D'Argenson turning round, and speaking in a confidential tone; "which is more than thy late employers did! But, as I told thee before, secresy is an indispensable condition of our compact."

The respited felon bowed.

"Well, then;" continued the Lieutenant of Police; "I purpose to extend my operations, and make thee my chief assistant, at a considerable advance of pay! The system works well; its existence is unsuspected, and it has proved of infinite service to me! but I must perfect it! I will have it in my power to know—when it suits my purpose—the business—aye, even the most intimate thoughts—of every individual in the kingdom! Woe then, to such as offend me! There shall be nothing hidden from me; *sang dieu!* The lover shall not write to his mistress—nor the mistress to her lover—but I will be of the party! I will surprise family secrets and make a market of them; for of *these*, there is no lack. There shall be no political intrigue afoot, either, that I will not likewise make myself acquainted with, and aid, or mar, as best suits my views; no commercial speculation, but that I will, by this means, forestall, and turn to account. Every body shall feel my power; *tonnerre dieu!* My very name shall make the innocent tremble like the guilty! I have lived long enough to discover that no one loves me; but I don't care for that! I will soon make the proudest of them pay court and cringe to the man they most hate—even to me—and laugh in my sleeve whilst they do my bidding! What sayest thou to this, friend Grumeaud? is it not a grand, a glorious idea?"

"'Tis in every respect worthy of Monseigneur," replied the man.

"'Tis to thee I owe it," continued D'Argenson; "for thou did'st first conceive the means of executing it with impunity, though it was left for *me* to make it contribute to the public good! But our secret must not transpire, Grumeaud, or we shall put people on their guard! By the bye! have there been no letters yet for Father Pierre Simon?"

"I examined and entered in the register, all such as came addressed to individuals bearing the name of Simon, Monseigneur, but found none for *him!* Are you certain this is his name?"

"'Tis the only one I can discover that he bears, *mort-dieu!*" replied D'Argenson; "and I strongly suspect 'tis assumed! Keep a strict watch, notwithstanding, for sooner or later, we must obtain a clue to him! Hast thou seen any of Chamillart's people since I was last here?"

"Yes, Monseigneur!"

"Well? what did'st thou learn? Any news of that letter?"

"It was submitted by Monsieur Chamillart to the king, who after he had read it, signified his will that Quinault should be suspended during his majesty's pleasure, and further suggested the expediency of an immediate inquiry into the truth of the alleged accusation!"

"Good! good!" muttered D'Argenson, rubbing his hands; "this is indeed quick work! but it must not be done too hastily, for all that!"

The interesting conversation was at this point suddenly interrupted by the clatter of horses' feet in the court-yard, the cracking of whips, the neighing of horses, and the voices of many persons; D'Argenson looked up inquiringly at his subordinate.

"I dare say 'tis the overdue courier who has arrived," observed the latter.

"Where does he come from?" asked the Lieutenant.

"From the south, Monseigneur!"

"Hum! 'tis almost too soon; or I expected news from Tours;" said the former, musingly; "go and see who it is, Grumeaud!"

The man bowed and withdrew, but shortly returned in great haste, as though anxious to disburden himself of an important secret.

"'Tis the courier from Tours, Monseigneur," said he; "but there are two others—special messengers—one from Madrid, the other from Rome! According to your instructions, they were stopped at the barrier, and have been brought hither under escort!"

"Let them be searched!" exclaimed D'Argenson, exultingly; "I have staid for something, *mort-dieu!*"

The man withdrew a second time, and after a prolonged absence—during which his employer entertained himself by chipping the table with his pen-knife—came back laden with several packets of letters, which he deposited upon the table.

"The special couriers have brought only these, Monseigneur," said he, as he eased himself of two large, square, and well sealed packets; "the other letters are from Tours."

"Shut the door!" ejaculated D'Argenson.

The man obeyed, and resumed his position behind the chair of the Lieutenant, who taking up the bundle of letters that had come from the last mentioned place, commenced looking at them *seriatim*, reading the superscriptions aloud.

"Nothing! nothing!" observed he, turning very rapidly over the few that remained—"I could hardly have expected one, either! ah! what's this? *à Monsieur, Monsieur le Baron de St. Auney, care of the Sieur Jean Petit, Public Notary, Rue de*—Oh! oh! no wonder I was baffled! cunning! very! ah! ah! ah! but I have caught thee at last! The Sieur Petit was thy agent, eh?"

"Shall I take the fac-simile, Monseigneur?" timidly asked the man behind, remarking that his employer was inspecting the seal very minutely.

"'Tis not worth while," answered the latter; and breaking open the letter, and spreading it out upon the table, began reading it in a low voice, but loud enough for his colleague to become acquainted with its contents: they were as follows:—

at The chÂto de la gÂcheri this last da of
january 1700

mossieu le Barron and my much esteamed master. i rite to you in grate trubble and with a tremblin and for my art is ful there four you will excuse bad spelin for ive got a verry bad pen and hits verry bad

wether with us. though thank god we air all verry well for we Hav add A verry hevvy fal of snough hand a grate frost witch as destroyd all the vines. witch you no boar so well last seson. witch you no was a verry good one for the wine turns out verry good though this is not the greatest misfortune whitch as hapend to us. witch we cud easy bare. butt as you tolld me not to Rite agen to you in your last letter. whitch was dated from paris on the sixt of desember hand witch reatchd me on the twelf. no it waznt the twelf butt the leaventh. so eye dint. butt i xpeckted two ear agen from you as you sed you wood to tel me wen I waz to Rite to you agen. witch not earing from you as I xpeckted made me think sumthing has hapened to you as it has to us and witch i rite to tell you about. witch if you dont no it wil surpreyes you as it did us. for you must no my dear master that the châto has been seezed by a party of men who tuk it in the name ov the King and sed that mossieu dargenson ordured em. as there paper showd. though im sure hour good King duznt no any thing about it and so we air all verry much cut up. witch is all at Present from your old hand faithful servant JERÔME.

poskrip old tomas is goine to tours. so i send this by im. for we air all kep close prisners by the solejers and if they node it theyle kill im. butt ive hid the boks of papers you left behind in the wite tower in the sekret closet witch you no. hand eyeve berreyd the kee. god bless the young ladies and a kind word to antoine And prevô if you plees mossieu le Barron from your faithful servant. as i sed before JERÔME.

During the perusal of this epistle D'Argenson manifested much impatience, though he could scarcely repress a smile as he stumbled over the knotty diction, and the knottier punctuation of the Baron's servant; the latter portion, more particularly the postscript, appeared to interest him immensely, and he read it over two or three times as though afraid of missing its purport; having satisfied himself in this respect, he folded up the letter again, and making a few minutes in his register, conveyed the former into his pocket.

"This is better than I expected," said he, musingly; "much better! Every thing turns out as I could wish! But what does the old dotard mean by this box of papers! I must see into the affair without delay! he shall be made to give it up, *sang-dieu!* The white tower—the secret closet—and the key buried! very well, Maitre Jerôme! take care of thyself!"

Apparently, the packet from Tours contained nothing more to interest the speaker, who continued his inspection, notwithstanding; muttering to himself the while; throwing it aside he took up the second—the one brought by the messenger from Rome—and read the superscription: it was addressed to the Secretary of the Archbishop of Paris, was bound round with purple silk ribbon, and sealed with three large seals.

"Here's something for thee to do," exclaimed he, handing the epistle to Grumeaud; "the impression is bold, so it won't be difficult: quick! I'm impatient."

The man received the missive, examining it for a moment very narrowly; he then pinched off a piece of the composition, about the bigness of a nut, and commenced kneading it in his palm, employing the knuckle of his fore-finger for that purpose; having moulded it into a convenient form, he flattened one end of it, and applied it to one of the seals of the letter, pressing it hard down, in order that every interstice might be properly filled; a few seconds sufficed to take off a perfect fac-simile, which he compared with the original; the result proving satisfactory, he took a sharp pen-knife, and artistically removed the superfluous edges by paring them closely off, taking care to leave them smooth; this done, he held the new seal over the brasier until it was quite dry and hard—an operation that did not occupy more than five minutes—and when it was completed, handed it to D'Argenson, who after a minute scrutiny, nodded his head approvingly, and motioned to Grumeaud to open the letter.

This operation required considerable nicety, but was performed with the same skill as the last. Holding the packet at a convenient distance from the fire, Grumeaud began by loosening the ribbon, as soon as the warmth had melted the wax sufficiently to permit of its being done; he then repeated the process of warming, until the seals gave way, leaving the outer envelope intact; the inner ones were removed, in a similar manner, and the contents of the packet at length exposed to view.

They consisted of a small oblong box—which, on examination, proved to be a *reliquaire*—and a couple of letters; one of them addressed, like the cover, to the Archbishop's private Secretary, the second to "*Monseigneur the Archbishop of Toledo;*" both written in the same hand.

For a moment, D'Argenson looked the very picture of mystification, repeating the superscription of the latter epistle several times, striving to remember in what quarter of the world he had heard of the individual to whom it was directed; his memory, however, proved treacherous; throwing aside the box of holy relics, accompanying the action with an oath, he proceeded to inspect the missive addressed to the Secretary, Grumeaud having previously operated upon it.

The signature first struck his eye; it was that of Cardinal de Janson, the French Envoy to the Papal Court; but to his great mortification and astonishment, the letter contained no intelligence of moment, being made up of private details concerning the recent proceedings of the Holy See—the squabbles and intrigues of the Conclave—a paragraph relative to the declining health of His Holiness, (Pope Innocent the Twelfth) and a statement vouching for the authenticity of the relics: D'Argenson scanned its contents with darkening brow, and impatiently threw it down; snatching up the second letter, from which his colleague had already removed the seal—after taking a fac-simile of it—he began reading it; it ran thus:

" From the Vatican,

" This first day of February, 1700, A. D.

" My dear Cardinal,

" I send you this by a special courier, and according to your request, under cover to our friend, Monseigneur's Secretary.

" We trembled for your ultimate safety when we received the first account of your recent narrow escape, but were beyond expression pleased to learn that you had at length gained a place of safety. We hope, nevertheless, that concealment will not much longer be necessary ; for, my dear Cardinal, matters have arrived at a crisis.

" His Holiness received news, yesterday, from Madrid. The King is very ill, and I fear our cause is lost ; the Emperor has sent Monsieur le Comte de Harrach back : every thing seems to promise well for the House of Austria. Notwithstanding this contretems, D'Harcourt has succeeded in gaining over a considerable party to our interests, and, after being refused it during three months, has at length been admitted to a private audience with the King. The Queen, however, still resolutely opposes him : you know her influence over the weak mind of her Consort. Her Majesty and de Harrach were closeted together with him nearly the whole day before the courier left Madrid : D'Harcourt writes to say that he dreads the result.

" In this dilemma, I send to you, that you may confer with our Sister upon the subject, and decide at once upon the course to be pursued. There is not a moment to be lost. Whatever is done, must be done quickly. Whatever step is taken must be decisive.

" His Holiness desires me to assure you of his sincerity and zeal.

" In haste, but still, my dear Cardinal.

P.S. You shall hear from me again in a few days.

" Your's devotedly.

" DE JANSON."

D'Argenson read this epistle to the end, without the smallest sign or the least word of astonishment escaping him ; so intent was he upon the perusal of it, that his subordinate enjoyed ample opportunity of making himself likewise acquainted with its contents—a feat which he accomplished by bringing his eyes upon a level with the paper, from behind his employer's shoulder—tying certain little knots in his memory at particular passages, and resuming his perpendicular position as soon as his curiosity was gratified—nothing less, however, than a second inspection would satisfy D'Argenson ; having completed which, he sank backwards into his chair, and crossing his arms, remained for a short interval absorbed in reflection ; the fit over, he refolded De Janson's letter, and—much to the mystification of Grumeaud—conveyed it into his pocket.

" What's from Madrid ?" ejaculated he, speaking to himself ; " ha! to Chamillart! Bravo ! This time I will be first !" and he unceremoniously broke open the despatch addressed to the Minister : it was short, and to the following effect.

"*Madrid, Friday, 2nd February* 1700.

"*My dear Chamillart—all is lost I fear! The Queen and De Harrach have persuaded His Majesty to write—yes, under his own hand—to the Emperor! His choice will fall on the Arch-duke—at least so I am given to understand. But this must not be! The public voice is averse to it—and the Comte de Monterey has sworn to oppose it with the whole strength of his party—now very considerable—and supported, moreover, by the Holy Father and yourself. In the hopes of gaining time, I have induced His Majesty to consult with the Church before he decides. This he has done. A courier leaves this for Rome, to-morrow; he is the bearer of a letter from the King. I also have written to His Holiness, beseeching him to temporize with His Majesty, until the Cabinet of Versailles—our secret council I mean—has determined what to do!*

"*I should suggest the assembling of an army on the Spanish frontier, and my being appointed to the command of it—a step which would necessitate my recall as ambassador! Intimidation will perplex King Charles—the rest must be left to circumstance and to me! Could I only get rid of the Queen for a short time, we might yet succeed.*

"*I am, my dear friend,*

"*Ever faithfully Your's,*

"*D'Harcourt.*"

This letter the Lieutenant of Police also perused twice, and thereby afforded Grumeaud an opportunity of perusing it too, which he did, unseen and unsuspected; when he had finished reading it the second time, D'Argenson relapsed into his fit of abstraction, though it did not prove of long duration; dashing his hand upon the table he suddenly exclaimed, half aloud:

"I have it! I shall now be able to crush *him* too; *tonnerre dieu!* But I must first learn a little more of this intrigue, for as yet I do not perceive its drift!—Grumeaud!"

"Monseigneur!"

"Place the private Secretary of the Archbishop on our list of suspected persons! Intercept all letters addressed to him, from whatever quarter, and make a note of their contents: if any more special messengers arrive, detain them, and take away their despatches. Withhold also all missives to Chamillart—and such as are directed to the Sieur Jean Petit, Public Notary; dost hear?"

"I do, Monseigneur! Any thing else?"

"Seal up that packet again!" he pointed to the one containing the relics.

"And the letter, Monseigneur!" observed Grumeaud.

"I can find a use for it!" replied D'Argenson, thoughtfully.

Grumeaud bowed and proceeded to obey his employer.

The operation was simple enough, and performed with much dexterity; indeed, so neatly as to defy detection; the letter to the Secretary oeing re-folded, re-sealed, and laid in precisely the same position upon the *reliquaire*, the ribbon was attached with scrupulous attention that

each fold and each seal fell in its proper place; the packet was next subjected to the process of warming, until the wax was sufficiently melted to adhere, and to receive the impression of the forged seal: it was then handed to D'Argenson, who having examined it very minutely, nodded his head in token of his satisfaction:

"Don't you think it wants something, Monseigneur?" asked the man, casting a very sly glance at his employer.

The latter looked again, and observed that he did *not* think so.

"There's no gloss on the wax, Monseigneur!" remarked Grumeaud, with a cunning smirk.

"*Pardieu!* thou art right!" exclaimed the Lieutenant of Police; "but surely that will not be observed."

"Can't make too certain," resumed Grumeaud; and taking from the shelf a small phial containing a clear, unctuous liquid, in which the feather-end of a crow-quill was inserted, he drew the latter very lightly over the surface of the new impressions, and with an air of triumph, threw the packet upon the table.

"I told thee thou hadst genius!" exclaimed D'Argenson, looking at the seals; "thou hast taught me a lesson in cunning that I shall not soon forget!"

"You have torn Monsieur Chamillart's letter," observed Grumeaud, eyeing it as it laid on the table; "what's to be done with it?"

His employer made no reply, but taking the epistle up, folded it very carefully, and placed it in the same receptacle as the other.

"Thou must deliver that packet, thyself, Grumeaud," said he, pointing to the one which his colleague had just exercised his ingenuity upon; "'twill be early enough at night-fall."

"And the couriers, Monseigneur?" suggested Grumeaud, in a faltering tone:

"Yes! I have thought of them!" replied D'Argenson; "I will have no babblers! *tonnerre dieu!* Go and tell the sergeant of the escort to come hither."

Whilst the man was absent, the Lieutenant of Police filled up two papers, which he withdrew from his portfolio, and signed them; by the time he had done this, Grumeaud had returned, followed by the sergeant:

"Thou hast two couriers in charge," said D'Argenson to the latter as he entered.

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied the man.

"Conduct them to the Bastile; but be silent. Here is a letter for the Governor, and here is the *lettre-de-cachet!* If they resist, shoot them! Go!"

The soldier made the military salute, received his instructions, and departed, leaving the Lieutenant of Police and his assistant to continue their nefarious operations.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SHROVE-TUESDAY IN PARIS, IN THE YEAR SEVENTEEN HUNDRED. HOW THE LUTETIANS ENJOYED THEMSELVES UPON THAT DAY.

The lapse of exactly one week from the day on which these confiscations of private property were effected, brings us to Shrove-Tuesday, the thirteenth of February, in the year of Grace One Thousand Seven Hundred.

And a bright, glorious day it was too; for in spite of the perverseness of an ugly mass of sullen clouds in attempting to keep the blue sky all to themselves, and so prevent any body from seeing it, the sun awoke that morning in such a merry mood, that, making light of their black looks and frowns, he burst through them all; and with such a smiling, happy, good-natured face, all Nature immediately set up a general laugh in chorus—winking in very gladness—until the snow, unable to resist a contagion so universal, actually melted into tears—bright, rainbow-coloured tears—which forthwith began streaming down from the sloping roofs of houses, and the shelving ledges of windows, and the branches of the trees, and to fall with the merriest little pitter-patter imaginable upon the causeway beneath; sparkling and twinkling in the sun-beams, and adding their mite to the universal cheerfulness.

The frost, however, still kept its hard gripe of the earth, persisting in looking as black as ever, and when out of sight of the sun, venting its spite upon every body that went along—pinching the tips of their fingers, nipping their toes, or tweaking the end of their nose—congealing the snow as it fell, half-melted, and wickedly covering the public thoroughfare with slippery places, on purpose to throw people down; but these trifling accidents only served to create more merriment, for every body seemed determined to laugh and to make fun of every thing; even at his own expense; the smoke, too, as it escaped from the tall, quaintly-fashioned chimneys, twisted itself into the oddest and most fantastic forms, dancing about in the air with more than usual elasticity and lightness, whilst the very sparrows, bent upon making the most of the sun-shine, and quarelling amongst themselves about the warmest places—perched in rows of fives and sixes upon the house-tops, and along the gutters, and fluttering their tiny wings, peeped inquisitively over into the street beneath to see what was going on there, chirruping away the while as noisily as if there were not in existence such things as cats lying in ambuscade in the corners of garret-windows, or well-baited traps set in back-yards, and front-yards, and such-like convenient spots, closely watched by small boys holding long strings; even the snow crackled under the foot, as if delighted at being trodden down; in fact, every thing appeared to assume an air of unusual liveliness, and the whole city, from one end to the other, to be on the move.

It was, notwithstanding, perfectly evident that this extraordinary bustle and activity did not proceed from any sudden wish on the part of the thrifty citizens to do an extra stroke of business, for the greater number of the shops were closed, and the owners of such as were not, lounged listlessly at their own door, dressed in their holiday suit, cracking jokes with their neighbours, or with any body who felt inclined to crack another with them in return, until, laughed out of the conceit of expecting customers on such a day as Shrove-Tuesday, and renouncing the idea as a fallacy against which they determined to guard in future, they imitated the general example, and shutting up in turn, joined the gay throng that was now fast pouring in one continuous stream from every quarter, and disembogueing itself into the various avenues leading to the grand *boulevard* of the interior.

A fine day generally effects wonders in the way of coaxing the multitude into a good humour, but most especially a fine holiday; need it be said that the day in question was a holiday—and that being a fine one, every body seemed disposed to enjoy it to the utmost extent of his ability? (for the true-bred French citizen—be it said—is remarkably clever in this respect) it belonged, moreover, to that class of festivals, which, falling 'only once a year,' are the more relished on account of their rarity; nor was the excitement that evidently pervaded all classes, diminished by their knowledge of the fact of its being the last day of the Carnival; on the contrary, it appeared to be hourly on the increase, for, besides the privilege of assuming the mask for four and twenty hours, and of joking with the masquers as they passed—whatever their degree or rank—the mask placing all who wore it on the same level—it was the anniversary of the procession of the Bœuf-Gras, (Fat ox) and every body was on tip-toe expecting it, those who had seen it, being every whit as anxious to enjoy the sight again as those were who had never beheld it in their life.

As the day wore, the crowd increased, every street, every lane, disgorging its masses of living beings; the old, the young, and the middle-aged, jostling one another as they elbowed and pushed their way towards the line of march that the procession was expected to observe: every window commanding a view of it, rapidly filled with persons of each sex gorgeously arrayed in costume of various clime, whilst from the balconies waved gay streamers and *oriflammes*, and banners characteristic of every nation, bearing appropriate mottos; here and there, bands of huntsmen habited in coat of green, wound their horns, whose echoes were repeated by others farther on until drowned in the hum of the multitude, from the midst of which, every now and then, arose a boisterous laugh excited by the buffooneries of some grotesque masquer, or by some well timed jest; numerous chariots and carriages richly gilded and emblazoned, and drawn by horses sumptuously caparisoned, crossed and re-crossed in every direction, their progress occasionally interrupted by the passage of the more modest sedan, with its accompaniment of long poles and running footmen; now would appear a cavalcade consisting of some twenty or thirty knights, armed cap-a-pie, attended by their squires, and whose

course was marked by a great waving of plumes, and a glittering of burnished armour, and a loud snorting of steeds; anon—mounted on Quixotic coursers, bare of mane—followed a body of frolicksome Clerks of the University, riding two and two, some double, with their faces turned towards the tail of their steeds, they themselves being disguised beneath a prodigious length of nose, and an equal growth of beard, and chaunting in full chorus the *chausons grivoises* of the period, intermingled with shouts, and yells, and gesticulations of peculiar significance; then came a sprinkling of masquers on foot, habited in costumes most diverse and strange; nor was there lack of Mountebanks, with their Jack-puddings and waggeries to keep up the mirth of the populace whenever it began to flag; there was also a display of curious devices — living satires — allegorical of private opinions or popular errors, and bearing reference to passing events; two or three of these were greeted with particular marks of approbation — such as *Polichinelle* arm-in-arm with a mock monarch who bore some resemblance to the King of Spain—a Harlequin in intimate conference with a robed Senator, whose likeness to Chamillart was unmistakeable—a speaking effigy of his Satannic Majesty, ear-wigging a certain Cardinal in the act of grasping the triple crown: then came more carriages—more masquers—men hooting—women screaming—children screeching with delight and clapping their tiny hands high over the heads of the multitude—masquers again, crowding confusedly together, and jumbled up with sedans, and horses, and soldiers, and lackeys, &c. with ringing of bells, clashing of music, and peals of laughter, but joyful faces every where: such was the scene on the Grand Boulevard.

The excitement had reached its height, when there arose in the distance, above the clamour of the crowd, a deep, continuous murmur, gaining strength as it travelled down the line; a moment of comparative silence followed, then a sudden rush took place forwards, with a great dodging about of heads, and a general stretching out of necks to an unnatural length, and a great straining of eyes in one direction; little boys clambered up into the trees, and grown-up folks stood on tip-toe and ranged themselves as well as they could—those who were behind, pushing and elbowing and squeezing their way through, to secure good places in the front, and those who were already in front and had obtained them, resisting might and main every attempt to dislodge them from their post—the tall taking every thing very coolly and comfortably—the short, looking very red in the face, and in the height of their despair at being unable to overlook their more favoured neighbours, grasping desperately at the said neighbours' coat-collars; struggling to obtain a peep over their shoulders as the shouts and the music became more distinct, proclaiming the nearer approach of the procession: at length it came in sight, amidst the huzzaing of the crowd, the waving of handkerchiefs, the din of music, and a clamour of voices that beggars description.

First appeared a body of six or more Halberdiers, clearing the line of march, followed by a full military band, procured for the occasion,

walking four abreast, and attired in complete suits of mail, with plumed helmets and visors up; immediately in the rear of these, pranced a noble charger, magnificently caparisoned, bearing a herald sounding a trumpet; the next personage was Jacques, habited in the costume of the Roman emperors, with the imperial mantle thrown over his shoulders, and holding in his right hand a truncheon, whilst in his girdle was thrust a short sword; his feet were sandaled, and his head bare, with the exception of a wreath of laurel that encircled it; after him, towering high above the multitude, marched his two gigantic Lutetian subjects, Jean Bourliquet the smith, and Samson le Gros the mason, each habited in accordance with the cognomen given to him by their companion, Democritus; Bourliquet as Vulcan, carrying upon his right shoulder a ponderous sledge-hammer, which he occasionally flourished in the air, as if to impress people with the belief that it was not the real, *bonâ fide* sledge-hammer that he was in the habit of using; and Samson as Hercules, with a lion's skin, fastened upon his head and hanging thence down his back, his left hand armed with a club that looked like the root of a small tree, and which—emulous of Vulcan's dexterity—he whirled about with as much apparent ease as though it were hollow and stuffed with feathers; these two, upholding a double garland, by which he was adorned, conducted the animal after whom the procession took its name, walking a little in advance of him, Vulcan to the right, Hercules to the left, and looking every inch the very heathen deities they represented. The Ox himself, fat to unwieldiness, but symmetrically proportioned, was bedecked with flowers, and wore the sacred stole, stalking painfully along, with half-closed eyes, foaming mouth, and drooping head, notwithstanding his gilded horns and gilded hoofs. He was followed by two standard-bearers, appropriately costumed, each upholding a flag, on one of which the ox figured in a kneeling posture, the other being studded with the royal fleurs-de-lys. Next came a grand car, drawn by four spirited coursers, covered with trappings and housings of costly stuff, pawing and snorting in full consciousness of the importance that their caparisonings gave them in the eyes of the beholders; but the car itself excited demonstrations of vehement delight. The body, elaborately painted and gilded, was constructed in the form of a shell, in which reclined a beautiful young female, intended to impersonate Venus; she was attended by two nymphs, one on each side of her, whilst high over her head, securely ensconced in a small gilded throne, sat a smiling child, with curly, flaxen locks, holding in one hand a tiny bow, and in the other a sceptre, and having a quiver full of tiny arrows, slung across his arm, and a pair of minute wings fastened to his shoulders; the charioteer, who was no less a personage than Democritus, in the dishabille of Father Time, occupied a prominent position in front, perched upon a curiously-fashioned box, distinct from the body of the car, behind whom, raised above all, sat Perè Pommier the vintner astride upon a wine-barrel, in the very appropriate character of Bacchus, being profusely arrayed with wreaths of flowers, and flourishing high

How the Lutherans enjoyed themselves on Shrove Tuesday in the year 1700.

in air a goblet of respectable capacity, whose fellow was in the possession of Father Time, the worthy pair emptying and replenishing the same, and hob-nobbing together with a frequency and a recklessness of demeanour totally incompatible with the dignity of such ancient personages. In the rear of the triumphal car figured a troop of horsemen variously habited, and bearing banners appertaining to every nation under the sun; Knights of the Holy Crusade, Infidel Saracens, Turks, Tartars, Romans, and modern Greeks, Persians, and ancient Gauls, men in armour with furbished helm and corselet, and graceful, waving plume, and last of all, mingling indiscriminately together, a motley company of both sexes, on foot, not belonging to the procession, but that had joined it during its onward progress, and was every moment increasing by new comers who filled the air with their shouts and other extravagant demonstrations of joy.*

It had reached that point of the Grand Boulevard where the Rue Richelieu—then thickly studded with hôtels and large gardens—abuts upon it, when it was suddenly hailed with a deafening burst of acclamation proceeding from a group stationed at the gate of the same name, in the midst of which figured the Duke of Chartres and his dissipated companions, the Abbé Dubois, the Chevalier de Brancas, and the Marquis d'Effiat, who had apparently only just come up, and was bow-

* The custom of promenading an Ox in triumph, on Shrove Tuesday, is, to this day, observed generally throughout France. At Paris it is called "*Le Bœuf Gras*," but in the provinces, "*Le Bœuf villé, violè or viellè*," from the word *viol*, the procession being usually preceded there by a party of musicians furnished with instruments of this description.

The origin of the custom can be traced back to the days of Paganism, when the Ox was an object of veneration amongst all those nations that cultivated the science of astronomy, and more particularly amongst the Egyptians, who worshipped Osiris under the form of this animal, because he encouraged agriculture. The Lutetians (Lutetia was the ancient name for Paris) also worshipped the Zodiacal Bull, and at the spring equinox, when the sun entered ♉, celebrated certain rites in honour of him.

On the 16th of March, 1711, some workmen who were employed to repair the foundation of the cathedral of Notre Dame, found imbedded in a wall that crossed the choir in its width, from north to south, nine large cubiform stones, having on each face relievos and inscriptions. Eight of these represented certain Gallic and Roman deities, and the ninth, which was of larger dimensions than the others, had on one side of it the effigy of a Bull surrounded with laurel leaves, and wearing the sacred stole; upon his head figured a Crane, and upon his back were perched two more, these birds being symbolical of the Moon, and likewise accounted of favorable omen. Above was the inscription, "TARVOS TRIGARANUS," which, however, on account of doubtful orthography and the rude form of the letters may be read also; "TARNOS OR TAUROS TRIGARANOS," *the Bull with three Cranes*: on each of the other sides were figures of Jupiter, Vulcan, and Esus, a Gallic deity.

It is worthy of remark, that the actual site of Notre Dame, was originally occupied by a temple and an altar dedicated to Jupiter, which were destroyed after Cæsar's conquest of Gaul: whether the stones alluded to ever formed a part of the altar is uncertain, though highly probable; whilst, with reference to the dubious orthography of the inscription on the one in question, the interest that attaches to it, as an antiquity, is materially augmented by the fact of the etymology being Greek —ΤΑΥΡΟΣ, *a Bull*; ΓΕΡΑΝΟΣ, *a Crane*.

Shrove-Tuesday is at the present period observed in Paris as the festival of the Butchers, and the child, which is sometimes seated on the Ox, carries a sceptre and a knife, being called the King of the Butchers.

ing to the Duke. At the same moment, Jacques' quick eye caught a glimpse of the Lieutenant of Police, enveloped in a huge cloak, speaking furtively to two individuals whose faces were concealed beneath a mask, but whom, nevertheless, he had no difficulty in recognizing; they belonged to the corps of *mouchards*, and upon receiving D'Argenson's instructions, began moving in the same direction as the procession, evidently with a view to watch his (Jacques') movements. The spy, however, took no further notice of this circumstance beyond slyly pointing out the men to Vulcan and Hercules, who immediately commenced flourishing, the one his ponderous hammer, the other his not less formidable club, in a manner that greatly increased the delight of the crowd, and drew forth loud tokens of approbation from the Duke and his merry party, which, as the show disappeared, was augmented by the presence of the Lieutenant of the Police.

"Well, Monseigneur," exclaimed the Prince, as the latter drew near; "our friend Jacques does not appear afraid of showing his face!"

"*Sang-dieu*, no! But 'tis the first time he has shewn it to *me* for these two months," responded the other; "it shall go hard with me though, if I do not catch him *this* time."

"He has out-witted thee so often, friend D'Argenson," stammered Dubois—who wore the habit of a *petit abbé*, his companions being adorned with an exuberance of nose—"that I would venture a wager with thee upon the strength of the chance of his out-witting thee again."

"Wert thou in my place, Sieur Dubois," retorted the gloomy Lieutenant, "and I were in thine, I would wager in favour of Jacques; as it is, I am content not to win thy money, which should'st thou lose, I well know thou would'st never pay!"

"By St. Louis, Dubois is right," chimed in D'Orleans; "what say'st thou to the bet, if I become security for my virtuous preceptor? By my faith I am, myself, more than half inclined to bet too!"

"On which side, Highness?" asked D'Argenson.

"On the side of the Church, Monseigneur," retorted the Duke, slapping Dubois on the back, with a force that made him stagger forwards half a dozen paces.

"Your Highness will have the worst of the bargain," observed the Lieutenant of Police, with a meaning smile.

"That's doubtful, friend D'Argenson; but since I think the chances pretty equal, and the turn of the scale in my favour, what say'st thou to a wager?"

"To what amount, Highness?"

"I'm not at all particular," replied the spend-thrift Duke; "so that thou wilt only provide me with the means of paying thee if I lose!"

"Your bond, Highness, will suffice! Name the amount yourself!"

"Well! friend D'Argenson! I borrowed six thousand crowns of thee some time since; be that the sum! if I win, thou shall release me from the debt! if I lose, why thou shalt have another bond for the second six thousand!"

"And the interest, Highness," observed D'Argenson, eyeing the Duke askance, and rejoiced at the opportunity of duping him; "make it eight thousand!"

"What! art thou then so sure?" exclaimed D'Orleans, hesitatingly.

"The chances are equal, Highness, and the turn of the scale in your favour," responded D'Argenson with great readiness, quoting the Duke's own words.

"Ah! ah! true! thou hast me there," responded the latter; "well! let it be eight thousand!"

"A bet! a bet!" ejaculated the Prince's companions, who seemed to take great interest in the proceeding.

"And the Abbé?" suggested the Lieutenant of Police.

"Take me in for a hundred and fifty louis," said the former.

"With pleasure," retorted D'Argenson; "if his Highness will—

"Oh, yes! observed the Duke; "any thing for our little friend! We owe him too many obligations not to contract an extra debt or two on his account! Add another three thousand crowns, friend D'Argenson! I must however, impose one condition: thou shalt be limited to time!"

"Say 'tis a fair wager, Highness, and you shall name your *own* time!"

"By St. Louis, then, it *is* a wager," retorted the Duke; "thy hand upon it, and 'tis done! Friends witness the compact!" so saying, he held out his palm to D'Argenson, who placed his upon it, their companions exclaiming: "*a bet! a fair bet!*"

"And now for the time," continued D'Orleans; "we shall see thee, of course, at the masque to-night?"

"I shall be at Versailles within five hours from this time," answered the other.

"Good! then unless thou bringest me face to face with the Sieur Jacques as thy prisoner, at, or before nine o'clock this night, friend D'Argenson, thou shalt lose thy wager! mark that! and shalt pay me the balance due: five thousand crowns, within four and twenty hours after!"

"Agreed," replied the Lieutenant of Police, exultingly; "I almost wish your Highness had said within the next two hours: you might then have enjoyed the pleasure of seeing him captured!"

"What?" ejaculated the Prince; "if this is the case, I tremble for my money!"

"I fore-warned your Highness that you would have the worst of the bargain!"

"By the mass!" observed D'Effiat, "this is a most pleasant affair! What says your Highness to being present at the capture of this man? Our time is our own!"

"An excellent idea of thine, Marquis," replied the Duke; and we will act upon it! Hearest thou that, friend D'Argenson?"

The Lieutenant bowed, and answered that he did!

"Well!" resumed the former; "where shall we meet thee? and at what hour?"

"At the *cabaret* called the *Cep-de-Vigne*, Highness," responded D'Argenson, "where these mountebanks started from this morning; 'tis in the Rue des Mathurins, quartier St. Jacques, and is kept by one Maitre Chopin! Be there at—at—'tis now one—be there, Highness, at four o'clock—and you shall see! 'Tis there they are to dine I hear: but, by St. Marc! one of them, shall have no grace; *tonnerre dieu!* I have sent two of my agents to watch our man in; several more will follow, and blockade the house to prevent his escaping from it, should he suspect any thing; meanwhile, another will hasten to me! What says your Highness? Are not my measures well taken?"

"Excellently well, Monseigneur," replied the Prince, somewhat piqued at the palpable cheat that had been practised upon him; "excellently well, indeed, to rob me of five thousand crowns! But we will meet thee at the cabaret, notwithstanding; and by the Holy Cross, if Maitre Jacques escape thee this once, he shall for ever after have a claim upon my friendship!"

"No conniving at his escape, Highness," suggested the wily, suspicious Lieutenant.

"I leave such tricks for thee and thy craft, to practise, Monseigneur," retorted the Prince, haughtily; "come D'Effiat—come Dubois"—continued he, "we can find amusement until four!" and bowing slightly to D'Argenson, he turned on his heel, and was, with his companions, soon lost in the crowd.

"Fools!" muttered the Lieutenant of Police, as they disappeared: "they don't know me yet. My power is only in its infancy! but a few years hence, they shall see—they shall see; *mort dieu!*" and pushing his way through the multitude that pressed him on every side, he repaired to his *bureau*, there to await the arrival of his emissary.

Every thing fell out exactly as he had anticipated; the procession continued its march through the principal streets, still followed by the spies, until it reached the Rue des Mathurins, where it stopped at the cabaret kept by Maitre Chopin.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOW MONSEIGNEUR D'ARGENSON THOUGHT TO CATCH THE EMPEROR JULIAN, AND DID'NT SUCCEED.

THE establishment called the *Cep-de-Vigne*, was situated at the angle that the last-mentioned street formed with the *Rue de la Harpe*, and was a tall, gloomy-looking house, six stories high, exclusive of attics, owning three stiff, formal, old windows on a story, all the way up to the top, where, tired of standing upright, they reclined upon the roof, dwindling into sky-lights; beneath the middle casement, was a large gate-way, leading into a spacious court-yard, to the left of which—with a small parlour behind for the accommodation of a specia' few, and a lean, grated window in front, looking into the street—stood Maitre Chopin's bar, well stored with wide-mouthed, wooden pitchers bound with iron-hoops, pewter measures, rows of bottles, goblets turned topsy-turvy, and long loaves of bread lying on their side—and over which this worthy individual himself presided, keeping one eye constantly on the till—which was very handy—and the other on the customer—who was occasionally very absent. To the right of the gateway—having a second small, grated window, also looking into the street—was the kitchen, whence now issued a volume of steam, and a concentration of odours, that told of the marvels in the shape of cookery going on within, which were rendered still more palpable by the sudden apparition and disappearance, every now and then, of some two or three individuals with red-hot, shiny faces, wearing white aprons, and white cotton night-caps cocked jauntily upon their head, and a little on one side, the tassel-end being left to depend gracefully in the direction of the wearer's shoulder. Across the court-yard, immediately opposite the principal gateway, was a second entrance, having a wide flight of stone stairs to the right, and a second to the left, leading up to the different stories, the first only of which, with the ground-floor—appropriated to the use of dining-rooms, including half-a-dozen "*cabinets particuliers*"—were rented by the rubicund-visaged landlord of the *Cep-de-Vigne*. In the court-yard itself, stood the car that had so lately excited the admiration of the wondering populace, whilst, in one corner, crouched upon a heap of litter, and stripped of his garlands, lay the recently-worshipped ox, neglected and forgotten, mumbling sleepily a mouthful of common hay, like any other ox, looking broken in spirit, and for all the world as if he wished never to get up any more.

The excitement and the commotion that had reigned during the whole day throughout the *Quartier Latin* generally, and in the *Rue des Mathurins* particularly, and the bustle amongst the students and *studentesses*, in consequence of it being industriously rumoured abroad that the BŒUF GRAS intended to eat his last dinner within the classi-

cal precincts of the University, were unprecedented; to say nothing of the afflux of customers to Maitre Chopin's establishment, the various and peculiar domestic advantages whereof were elaborately set forth in gigantic red letters over the first tier of windows, conveying a tempting allusion to the existence within of a "*Salon à Cent Cinquante Converts,*" and a "*Cuisine Bourgeoise,*" to keep them going: the former indeed, had been constantly full since noon-tide, and the latter in active operation, whilst the apparently everlasting influx of fresh, hungry visiters, as the day waned, promised a still richer harvest to the fortunate vintner, provided his stock of edibles failed not.

Within a few minutes of the appointed time, the Duke de Chartres and his companions, Dubois, D'Effiat, and De Brancas, made their appearance at the door of the *cabaret*; the party had been recognized on its way, and followed by a troop of masquers rending the air with their shouts, which, on the Prince reaching the locality above-mentioned, burst forth with renewed vigour, summoning to every neighbouring window a mass of visages anxious to learn the cause of the extraordinary and sudden outcry: "*Vive Monsieur de Chartres! Vive Monsieur! Vive le Roi! Vive le Duc de Chartres!*" were the cries that resounded from every side, in which many a fair maiden joined, as her eyes rested upon the graceful form of the Prince, and upon his really handsome face, now no longer disfigured by the prominent nose he had worn in the earlier part of the day, it having been snatched off by some impudent masquer, and appropriated to his own use.

"*Vive Louis Quatorze!*" shouted the Duke, in reply to the compliment paid to him, accompanying the action by waving his plumed beaver; "the *Quartier Latin* for ever, with Shrove Tuesday every day in the week!"

"Without Lent to follow," exclaimed De Brancas. "*Vive Louis Quatorze! En avant la joie!*"

Taking out a handful of gold coins and *petits écus*, the Chevalier cast them into into the midst of the crowd, which immediately rushed in a mass to the spot towards which the golden shower was directed, scrambling with desperate earnestness in all directions to secure a portion of the prize.

"*Vive Louis Quatorze! En avant la joie!*" vociferated D'Effiat, accompanying the reiteration of the Chevalier's sentiment by a similar discharge of coin from his treasury, causing a second rush to the spot where it fell.

"My turn, Messieurs," shouted the Duke, showering his golden benefaction upon the multitude.

The confusion that already reigned, was by this last act heightened to an extreme degree; the scramblers tumbling over and over, sprawling and kicking one another, and grasping at the coin as it rolled, swearing lustily when it was caught up by some fortunate individual outside the crowd, who had risked neither his garments nor his limbs to get it, and fighting amongst themselves to secure the ownership of what they had picked up, the shouts from the windows and from the lookers-on increasing in loudness, the prime movers of the

whole scene meanwhile manifesting the greatest delight, exciting the multitude by their gestures and vociferations.

At this moment two sub-officers of the *garde de súreté* (a kind of day patrol), turned the corner of the Rue des Mathurins, causing a sudden diversion, and changing the prevailing mirth into a feeling somewhat assimilate to terror: for they were followed by D'Argenson, at the head of a detachment of soldiers, whose appearance, even unaccompanied by such an escort, was always known to be the forerunner of some catastrophe.

In a moment, the tumult was hushed, and every eye directed towards the cabaret, in front of which a space was cleared by the soldiers; in the centre stood D'Argenson, and the two sub-officers; these, at the head of some of their subordinates, immediately took up the position—apparently pre-assigned to them—at the door and at the gateway, rendering it impossible for any person to leave Maitre Chopin's establishment unrecognized.

"We are here to our time, Monseigneur," said the Duke, making up to D'Argenson.

"Before the time; pardon *me*, Highness," observed the latter, bowing: "four o'clock struck as we turned the corner: I like to be punctual!"

"Well!" resumed the Duke; "I cannot wish success may attend thy steps!"

The Lieutenant of Police bowed in reply, and attempted a smile; in this, however, he wofully failed; beckoning to the agent who had been keeping watch, he inquired of him, in a hurried, anxious manner, *whether all was right?*

"He is within, Monseigneur," answered the man.

"Art sure of that?"

"Why, Monseigneur, he was talking with Maitre Chopin not a quarter of an hour ago!"

"Thou art *certain* he has not come out!" asked D'Argenson, with marked emphasis.

"I would hold up my hand to it," replied the *mouchard.*

The Lieutenant nodded, and selecting some seven or eight soldiers —his reserve—entered the cabaret, followed by D'Orleans and his friends.

All this occupied so brief a period, that the landlord of the *Cep-de-Vigne*—who was a good-natured-looking little man, with a florid complexion and a pimpled nose, and wore a leathern apron, and his shirt-sleeves tucked up—had scarcely time to look surprised, before he found himself confronted with the much-dreaded Lieutenant of Police.

"Where's the man Jacques?" said the latter abruptly to him, as he entered.

"Jacques, Monseigneur?" answered Chopin, thoughtfully, and becoming intensely absorbed in the symmetrical arrangement of the glasses and goblets upon his counter.

"Yes! Jacques! *tonnerre dieu!* the man who headed the proces-

sion of the Bœuf Gras ; thou knowest him ;" remarked D'Argenson, eyeing the vintner very suspiciously ; who having disposed the drinking vessels in due order, now began rincing such as were unclean in a tub of water that stood handy.

" Oh !" retorted Chopin, closing one eye, and holding up a glass between it and the light ; " Jacques, Monseigneur ! Yes ! oh yes ! I know Jacques !"

" *Sang dieu* !" screamed the Lieutenant, seizing the small door of the counter, and shaking it, in order to effect an entrance ; " thou art trifling with me ! Where *is* Jacques, I say ?"

" Oh ! somewhere about !" answered the imperturbable vintner ; " he was speaking to *me* just now ! I hope there's nothing amiss, Monseigneur !"

" He is my prisoner," exclaimed D'Argenson ; " I must search thy premises, Maitre Chopin."

" Search away," responded Chopin, unfastening the wicket ; " you have the right !"

Here D'Orleans nudged Dubois with his elbow, exchanging a significant glance with his other companions, the whole party appearing perfectly to comprehend the true state of the matter.

" If thou hast concealed him any where, Maitre Chopin," observed the Lieutenant of Police, as he entered ; " I command thee, in the name of the King, to give him up !"

" You heard what I said, Monseigneur," replied the vintner ; " you're welcome to look ; he can't hide in a rat-hole, that's one thing, so you're sure to find him !"

Thus encouraged, the group at once crossed the Rubicon of the *Cep-de-Vigne*, and the search immediately commenced, headed by D'Argenson.

First of all he looked in the bar, and then in the little back-parlour behind it—where he found a jovial triumvirate of deities in the persons of Vulcan, Hercules, and Bacchus, oblivious of their immortality over a bowl of flaming spirits, which Vulcan was ladleing out, his companions watching the operation with extended glasses and other marks of great interest ; but Jacques was not here.

The Lieutenant of Police did not, however, betray any symptoms of disappointment, evidently persuaded that the spy was, as yet, unsuspicious of his presence, and that he should presently capture him when he least expected it. The very thought made him chuckle, and he peered into the faces of the three grotesquely habited individuals seated at the table, as if seeking to catch a glimpse of what was passing within their mind ; all at once he addressed Vulcan, some circumstance relating to this worthy personage having, apparently, suddenly recurred to his memory.

" Thy name is Bourliquet," said he ; " Jean Bourliquet !"

" I have that honour, Monseigneur," retorted the other.

" Thou art a smith and farrier ; eh ?"

" I am proud to say I am, Monseigneur ; I have raised the art of forging horse-shoes to a science ; I can make one in a single heating !"

"Thy forge is in the Faubourg St. Antoine," continued the Lieutenant of Police.

"It is, Monseigneur!

"What has become of thy mate Pierre?" enquired D'Argenson, staring very intently at Bourliquet.

"I haven't seen him since this day week," replied Bourliquet, without a moment's hesitation; "I hope nothing's happened to the poor fellow!"

"Hum!" ejaculated the other; "thou art either very cunning, or thou art a traitor."

"I am no traitor, Monseigneur," retorted Vulcan, with an air of wounded dignity.

"I am not so sure of *that*," replied D'Argenson, whose eye-brows appeared to be affected with constant cramp; "had I been there, he should not have passed the gate so easily; *mort dieu!* But, mark me Maitre Bourliquet; if I discover thee to have had any hand in the escape of a certain individual—thou knowest whom—take care of thyself!"

Bourliquet made no reply, but in earnest of the sincerity of his intention to obey D'Argenson's last injunction, forthwith renewed his attack upon the flaming punch, and taking advantage of that personage's disappearance, further indulged his humour in a quiet bit of pantomime, in the course of which his hammer was made to perform sundry aërial evolutions, the said pantomime being expressive of his determination to *take care of himself* to the utmost extent of his ability.

Pushing open a side-door that led into the dining-rooms on the ground-floor—now filled with masquers making merry—the Lieutenant of Police resumed his search; not a countenance escaped scrutiny; not a corner, not a nook that was not minutely examined; but unsuccessfully still. Placing a soldier at the door, with orders to let no one pass in or out, he crossed the court-yard, his next visit —greatly to the astonishment and terror of the cooks—being to the culinary laboratory, and to the row of offices communicating with it; then to the rooms up-stairs, where there were more masquers, revelling, some of whom would, for sundry private reasons of their own, gladly have hidden any where rather than encounter the official who had so unexpectedly come amongst them; Jacques, however, was not forthcoming. D'Argenson looked dismayed, and cursed; D'Orleans and his companions laughed, whilst the soldiers ogled the tables longingly, as though they would vastly like to join the feast. Placing another of these at each door, as a measure of greater precaution, the Lieutenant of Police returned to the bar, in front of which he found congregated the deities in question absorbed in close and animated conference with Chopin.

"Thou art a traitor, *sang dieu!*" shouted he, threatening the latter with his sword; "thou hast concealed this man somewhere! Speak, knave; where is he?"

Nothing daunted by this ebullition of rage, Chopin coolly inquired

"whether Monseigneur had examined every place *well*, and whether he felt *quite* certain that the man of whom he was in quest was not amongst the guests in the dining rooms?"

"No! no! no! *ventre bleu*!" vociferated he; "I am not so easily deceived! he is not amongst them."

"Then we must take for granted, Monseigneur, that he is not on the premises," observed the other.

"Thou liest, varlet! thou liest! *mort dieu*! he *is* here! I know he is! Thou would'st cheat me; but I will not be foiled thus! Lead the way to thy cellars! By St. Marc he shall *not* escape me!"

"Oh! my five thousand crowns!" exclaimed D'Orleans, with mock dolefulness.

"This is no time for pleasantry, Highness," remarked D'Argenson, surlily; "Jacques is a traitor! I have sworn to hang him, and 'fore God, I'll do it! Now, fellow!" continued he to Chopin: "go on!"

The vintner had during this short colloquy lighted torches; placing one in the hand of the last speaker, and holding the other himself, he led the way to his cellars, which were attained by a trap situated between the little back-parlour and the rooms on the ground floor. Close behind these two, came the Duke and his companions, then the soldiers, and lastly, unperceived by those in advance, Vulcan and Hercules, armed with their formidable insignia.

In vain, however, the Lieutenant of Police peered into every corner of the vaults—turning over empty tuns, or suspiciously sounding those that were full; the spy could not be discovered. Disconcerted at his in-success, smarting too under the Prince's gibes and exulting sarcasms, in which his companions joined, he stalked up to Chopin with angry gestures, applying to him the most opprobrious names and epithets, which however produced no reply from the vintner, nor any other effect than making his face grow very pale and then very purple.

"By heavens! there is some mystery connected with this man's disappearance," said he; "thou hast secreted him somewhere, *sang dieu!* speak, traitor, scoundrel! speak! where is he?"

"How should I know, Monseigneur?" replied Chopin, sullenly.

"But thou dost know; *ventre bleu!*" resumed D'Argenson, foaming with passion; "I can depend upon the vigilance of my agents outside, who swear he has not quitted this house!"

"Well, Monseigneur," interrupted the blunt host of the *Cep-de-Vigne*, "you've searched my premises pretty well, I think, and ought to feel satisfied he is not here! With your permission, I'll return to my customers!"

"Where hast thou hidden him, I say?" continued the Lieutenant of Police, again menacing Chopin with his sword, and taking no notice of that individual's observation.

"Hidden him?" reiterated the latter, sneeringly; "perhaps I've hidden him in—in—in my pocket!"

"Ha! the walls! the walls!" shrieked D'Argenson; "I have it! there's some secret recess here into which he has escaped! I'll pull thy house about thy ears but I'll discover it! *tonnerre dieu*!"

Throwing down his sword, and snatching a musket from the hands of one of the soldiers, the Lieutenant of Police began sounding the walls in every direction, becoming so absorbed in the operation as not to be aware of the proximity of the smith and the mason, who, perceiving his object, quitted the position they had hitherto occupied in the rear of the soldiers, and, to the great astonishment of the Prince and his companions, suddenly placed themselves in the very centre of the party, apparently deeply interested in the result of D'Argenson's labours.

There was a moment when this individual's position—unknown to him—became exceedingly critical; he had reached that part of the masonry concealing the secret entrance to Lutetia, by which—as will already have been surmised—Jacques had in fact escaped; and without suspecting its existence there, commenced sounding the spot with renewed earnestness, increasing the restlessness of Vulcan and Hercules, to a degree that did not fail to attract the observation of the Duke and his party; so artfully, however, was the door contrived by which the subterranean passage was gained, that he threw down the musket in despair, and turning suddenly round, encountered the deities in question, who were now standing close to him, watching his movements very narrowly.

"Hulloa!" exclaimed he, starting, and eyeing them suspiciously; "what brought you here?"

"Why, Monseigneur," responded Vulcan, with great coolness, "we are true and loyal subjects of His Majesty; hum!"

"Fool!" ejaculated D'Argenson in reply; "what has that to do with your being here? eh! *sang dieu!*"

"Suppose there had been a traitor here, Monseigneur?" observed the other, inquiringly.

"Well! what then? *ventre bleu!*"

"Why—that's all;" exclaimed Vulcan; and he allowed the end of his ponderous hammer to fall upon the ground, in a manner that very expressively conveyed his meaning, Hercules brandishing his massive club the while with a dexterity that was more remarkable to the general observer, than agreeable to those who stood close to him.

"Come, Monseigneur," observed D'Orleans, laughing; "thou hast lost! Confess thyself beaten!"

"No! *tonnerre dieu!*" retorted he; "I have yet till nine to night;" and abruptly quitting the party, he rapidly made the best of his way to the bar. When the Duke and his companions reached it, he was gone; having left the military under the command of a sub-officer, with orders to remain on duty at the cabaret until further instructions.

"Friends!" exclaimed the Duke, "let us to Versailles! By St. Louis we have had a merry day of it! Maitre Chopin! broach a tun of thy best wine; or two, if thou wilt; and let all thy guests pledge the health of his Majesty. Huzza! huzza! Monseigneur D'Argenson loses eleven thousand crowns!"

"God save Louis Quatorze!" cried Chopin! "huzza for Monsieur de Chartres!"

"The Duke of Chartres for ever!" vociferated Vulcan, whirling his hammer till it whizzed again.

"The Duke of Chartres for ever!" echoed Hercules, flourishing his club!

"God save the King! Monsieur de Chartres for ever!" shouted the crowd.

In the midst of the general uproar, D'Orleans and his companions effected their retreat. Whilst the latter, however, was striving to disengage himself from the multitude that pressed him on every side, a tall man, completely disguised, and closely masked, placed a hand upon his shoulder; the Duke turned quickly round and encountered two dark eyes whose owner whispered him thus:

"I shall be at Versailles, to night, Highness! Chut! I am Jacques!"

Ere the Duke recovered from his surprise, the spy had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

OF THE GRAND MASQUE AT THE CHATEAU OF VERSAILLES, AND WHAT OCCURRED THEREAT.

ALTHOUGH astounded beyond expression at Jacques' communication, the drift of which he was not less perplexed to fathom than to account for his sudden appearance and equally sudden evanishment, the Duke de Chartres betrayed no indications of embarrassment or of surprise when he rejoined his companions, from whom he had, during the brief lapse of time that this incident occupied, been separated by the crowd; but diverting the conversation into a different channel, chatted, and laughed, and jested with them the whole of the way to Versailles, where they arrived at seven o'clock, the Prince's carriage having taken the party up at the Palais Royal.

The guests who had received an invitation from Madame de Maintenon to figure at her grand masque that night, were already beginning to flock to the palace, which was brilliantly illuminated throughout, each window emitting a blaze of light that fell in a misty stream upon surrounding objects, imparting new life and animation to the scene, but casting the neighbouring country into triple darkness.

In the great court-yard was stationed a military band playing divers popular and appropriate airs, a strong detachment of the Musketeers mounting guard at the several gates, whilst a body of Halberdiers formed a double line between which the visiters passed, extending from the principal entrance, up the grand-staircase, to the *Salle de Réception*, which latter communicated with the Grand Gallery.

Outside all was bustle and noise; with carriages and chariots, driving up and setting down in one direction, and driving off in another; lackeys hurrying backwards and forwards, and pages, bearing links,

dodging about here, and there, and every where; the cracking of postilions' whips; the neighing and snorting, and tramping of horses; the hallooing of running footmen striving to push their way through the mass of bipeds and quadrupeds that obstructed it; the shuffling of countless feet; the yell of a stray dog, seeking its lost master in the crowd; the shouts of the multitude outside the iron railings; all this was intermingled with the clash of brazen instruments, the ding-dong of bells, and the thunder of small ordnance in the park, forming one of those pictures of living confusion which no pencil, how graphic soever, can pourtray; no pen, however eloquent, describe with justice, nor individual eye embrace in entierty.

The ante-chambers and the *Salle de Réception*, besides being profusely decorated with garlands and nosegays of real flowers, were now thronged with the flower of the French nobility, male and female, arrayed in every variety of costume, from the most ancient to the most modern, including the simple, and the gorgeous, the grotesque, the civil, the martial, the *outrè* and the natural; not a nation under the sun but might here have pointed out its representative, nor a class belonging to that nation but could here have found its type: even those beings, the elfins and spirits of the fairy world, whose fabulous existence legendary associations have corporealized, lacked not living likenesses, whilst the heroes of mythologic story seemed to have forsaken Olympus, and for a while resumed their abode on earth.

At eight o'clock the large folding-doors of the Grand Gallery were flung open, and a dazzling blaze of light fell upon the anxious crowd of masquers, who immediately commenced moving in a dense stream, through the magnificent suite of apartments with which the Grand Gallery communicated, at the extremity of which latter, figured a temporary construction—for the accommodation of the orchestra —representing a Venetian bridge, the span of whose arch extended entirely across the saloon in its breadth, being raised above the second pair of folding-doors that opened from it into the other rooms.

Half an hour of suspense elapsed, during which not a voice rose louder than a whisper; suddenly, an extraordinary movement became perceptible amongst the company, and every whisper itself instantly subsided; such of the guests as were seated, rising to their feet, and such as were already standing ranging themselves so as to leave the passage free through the middle of the apartment; at the same moment, the band struck up a triumphal air, composed for the occasion, descriptive of the *Grand Monarque's* military achievements, having received the cue from one of the pages who came to announce the approach of the king.

The royal party was preceded by twelve officers of his Majesty's body-guard—the Musketeers—in full court-dress, and by six small pages in flowing perukes and *habits à la française;* immediately after these came Louis Quatorze himself, conducting Madame de Maintenon, and followed by his brother, Monsieur Duc d'Orleans and his Duchess; his son, the Dauphin of France; his grandson, Louis Duc de Bourgogne, Grand Dauphin, (*father of Louis Quinze*) his nrphew and

son-in-law, Monsieur de Chartres; his second grand-son, the young Duke D'Anjou, and a host of *dames d'atours*, and lords in waiting, with pages numberless, and a mass of masked visiters bringing up the rear.

As his Majesty progressed through the suite of inner apartments, he was greeted with loud and spontaneous demonstrations of loyalty, that, breaking through the stiff rule of etiquette, only attained their height on his reaching the Grand Gallery, where the bulk of the company was assembled, every lip reiterating the cry of "*Vive le Grand Monarque! Vive Louis Quatorze!*" till it was caught up by the multitude without, who hastily re-echoed the same, and rent the air with their shouts. The King acknowledged these marks of affection by repeatedly bowing and raising his beaver, turning round occasionally, to speak to his brother, or to his son, or to address a smile accompanied by some pertinent remark to his consort, Madame de Maintenon, whose eyes, as she bent them upon the fine countenance of the monarch, beamed with an indefinable expression of veneration and gratitude. Advancing with stately, measured step to the temporary throne erected for the occasion, and over which was raised a canopy of violet velvet richly embroidered with gold, surmounted by the royal fleurs-de-lys and the crown, Louis led her to the seat which she was to occupy to the right of his own, and sat down beside her, the members of the royal family and the remainder of the party, immediately dispersing themselves whither they listed. This was the signal for dancing to begin, and for etiquette to give precedence to pleasure; within the space of five minutes the whole company was in motion, and nothing could be distinguished save a confused, incongruous mass of living beings, agitating in every direction.

Although all the guests were masked, and habited in fancy costumes, no one belonging to the King's suite was thus attired. The monarch wore a satin coat of deep purple hue, elaborately laced with gold, the cuffs being made of the same material, only white, and turned up nearly elbow-high, in order to display an abundance of ruffle of the most exquisite lace that could be manufactured, and with which the ends of his cravat were also embroidered, these being allowed to depend from his throat and fall over the front of his waistcoat; the latter was of satin likewise, but inter-wrought with fleurs-de-lys in silver; high-heeled shoes, fastened with large, square, diamond buckles; a peruke arranged in long frizzy curls which covered his shoulders; and the elegant plumed beaver that he had himself introduced, completed his dress.

Madame de Maintenon was attired with equal simplicity and elegance; her petticoat was of white satin embroidered with gold, as likewise her train and bodice, which were of purple velvet, the former being further set off by a stomacher of diamonds and pearls of great price, a gift from her kingly consort; she wore a neck-lace and earrings of the same, and her hair quite plain.

The first dance was not sooner over, than there might have been discovered, standing apart from the other guests, and congregated in a remote corner of the saloon, a group consisting of four individuals;

these were the Duke of Chartres, the Abbé Dubois, D'Effiat, and De Brancas—the two latter masked and disguised—apparently engaged in a most interesting conversation, the chief burden of maintaining which devolved upon the Duke, for the others were listening to his recital with every symptom of astonishment; when he had brought it to an end, the whole party burst into a fit of laughter, which having subsided, afforded De Brancas an opportunity of observing that it was "very near the hour."

"Chut! chut! Chevalier;" said D'Orleans; "thou knowest the proverb! speak of the devil and he straightway shows his tail!"

"Pray were you talking of me, gentlemen?" exclaimed a voice close to the group.

D'Orleans and his companions turned quickly round, on hearing themselves addressed, and to their astonishment and amusement perceived that the owner of the voice was no less a personage than his Satannic Majesty himself, in proper person, with wings, and horns, and dorsal continuation complete, upon a very extensive scale; the latter especially; which, for fear of being trodden on, was carelessly tucked beneath its possessor's arm, who occasionally imparted to it a very lively movement, switching it backwards and forwards with a great deal of grace and elegance, and an amount of coolness perfectly refreshing.

"And where in the name of fate didst thou come from?" asked D'Orleans, as soon as he recovered from the fit of surprise into which the apparition of this grotesque being had thrown him.

"Don't ask!" responded the unknown, with a comic leer, that threw the group into convulsions of laughter; "thou wilt know some day! I have only stept out for an hour!"

"This is capital," cried D'Effiat, enjoying the perplexity of the Prince: "perhaps your majesty can tell us who will win the wager?"

"Wait till nine," replied the mysterious gentleman, pointing with the end of his tail to a magnificent time-piece that stood upon the chimney; "thou wilt not then need my prescience! News! news from Pandemonium! Wilt thou learn, my dear colleague—what they say in my dominions respecting a certain Abbé," here the speaker linked his arm very familiarly into that of Dubois, who struggled in vain to release himself, "who not long since, was instrumental in dragging a young, innocent girl to the Bastile? News! news from Pandemonium! I will tell thee her name!"

"Chut!" interrupted the Duke of Chartres; "thou art carrying thy pleasantry too far; were we alone, it might pass: seest thou not that we are surrounded?"

This was true, for the extraordinary appearance of his Satannic Majesty had excited general attention, and the masquers were now congregating in a mass around him, curious to witness his proceedings. Instead, however, of producing the effect he anticipated, the Prince's remark served only to divert the attack from the Abbé, (who was unable to answer,) to himself, for loosing his hold of Dubois, the personage in question laid a hand upon the Duke's arm, and continued:

"Nay, then, our royal brother; since thou wilt not hear her name,

shall I tell thee that of a friend of our's"—here he pinched him—"who stole a ring from a certain maiden's finger, and was robbed of it in turn? News! news from Pandemonium! hear the name!"

"Peace!" whispered D'Orleans in the speaker's ear; "let me have the laugh of D'Effiat and De Brancas, and I will forgive thee!"

"More news! more news!" continued the tailed gentleman, treading, as if by accident, upon the Chevalier's toe, but still retaining his hold of D'Orleans; "we know a certain Chevalier who plays high and always wins; but there's a great deal in the dice! News! news from Pandemonium! hear what's in them!"

A burst of laughter from the Prince, and a great fidgetiness on the part of De Brancas, whom this unexpected sally took completely by surprise, informed the by-standers that for once the parent of lies had spoken truth; the laugh became general, and was indeed, so boisterous, that it attracted more masquers, who eager to join in the fun, flocked to the spot, completely hemming in the principal group.

"More news, still; more news!" resumed his Satannic Majesty, switching his lateral appendage about, and contriving to let it strike D'Effiat rather smartly; "we have a friend, a Marquis, who has pledged to the Hebrews, every thing he possessed, except his word of honour, which they wouldn't accept as security for a livre! News! news from Pandemonium! I know his name!"

This speech was followed by another roar of merriment, such of the Marquis's friends as were present laughing more heartily than the rest, for many of them recognized him, in spite of his disguise, and those who did not, joining in from the mere force of example; in the midst of the uproar, the orchestra struck up the *gaillarde*—a dance still greatly in vogue—and his Satannic Majesty moved off to a more remote part of the Gallery for the purpose of intriguing another group, leaving the Duke and his party convulsed with merriment, and extremely perplexed with regard to his identity.

It wanted yet a few minutes of nine o'clock, when the Prince perceived Monsieur D'Argenson enter; directing the attention of his companions to the fact, they at once made up to him, D'Orleans opening the dialogue:

"Well, Monseigneur," said he, smiling; "where is the prisoner?"

"Curses on him, and on all who had a hand in assisting him to escape," replied the other, bitterly; "I have been duped; *mort dieu!*"

"And so have I," retorted D'Orleans; "I thought to lose five thousand crowns and have gained eleven! See! Monseigneur; the hand of the dial is on the stroke of nine!"

"Don't ask him to look," stammered Dubois! "Monseigneur never sees any thing that is against his interest! Every stroke costs him a thousand crowns, and a pain in the side!"

"Go on! go on!" muttered the Lieutenant of Police; "I expected this! But by St. Marc, though I have lost this time, I will yet have the laugh of you!"

"Thou art quite welcome to the *laugh*, Monseigneur," observed the Duke, "so thou make me welcome to the money!"

"By my faith," remarked D'Effiat, "he shall laugh at me as often as he likes, provided he pay me at the same rate for the privilege!"

"Or at me, either," chimed in De Brancas.

"Ah! ah!" exclaimed D'Argenson, chuckling; suspecting who they were; "the privilege is not worth purchasing! I can enjoy it gratuitously!"

"'Tis a great pity the office of court-jester is abolished," retorted the Chevalier de Brancas; "the marotte could not devolve upon a more fitting personage than our worthy friend the Lieutenant of Police!"

"So much for the opinion of *one* fool," quickly responded D'Argenson; "what say'st *thou*, Dubois?"

"Let me first hear *thy* opinion upon the subject, Monseigneur," replied he, adroitly; "though, by the way, I think the cap would fit thee!"

D'Argenson's retort was drowned in a burst of laughter that the Abbé's rejoinder had excited, in the midst of which he slunk away scowling at them all, and venting his mortification in a series of maledictions coined to suit the emergency.

He had scarcely disappeared, than a tall personage, habited in the costume of the Grand Inquisitor, emerged from behind the crowd that had congregated around the Duke's party, and taking advantage of a moment when the attention of the others were diverted, gently tapped the former on the shoulder.

"Highness!" whispered he; "I told you I should be here! I presume you know me!"

"Thou art the spy, Jacques;" replied the other in the same low tone. "What, in the name of all that is unearthly, brings thee hither? D'Argenson is here!"

"I know it, Highness! But, save yourself and a friend or two of mine, no one possesses the secret of my disguise, nor is even aware of my presence!"

"Pardon me, 'Sieur Mask," observed the Duke, colouring up; "I fear I have incautiously betrayed you to Dubois, D'Effiat, and De Brancas! I was just now relating to them my late adventure in the crowd, yonder! and telling them how you had promised to figure here to-night!"

"It was mal-address on your part," answered Jacques, gravely; "there was no necessity for babbling. However, the mischief is done, and must be counteracted if possible! You have placed my liberty in jeopardy! Let us withdraw! I would not court observation by seeming to engross your special attention."

"If I have foolishly endangered your personal safety," said D'Orleans, as they withdrew into a recess formed by one of the large windows, and concealed themselves behind the folds of the ample drapery, "thou may'st depend upon my co-operation in case of any emergency! But what brought thee hither at all?"

"That is *my* secret, Highness," responded the mysterious spy: "and provided none of your companions suspect me beneath this disguise, I am safe!"

"I would answer for them, unhesitatingly, friend Jacques; for did

they even suspect thee, their sense of honour would seal their lips! I must say thou art a bold man, notwithstanding. Had'st thou any particular motive for retiring with me to this place?"

"I had, Highness! I wished to speak with you, undisturbed! You were acquainted with the late Baroness de Monfort, who died at Fontainebleau about a twelvemonth ago, or rather more!"

"I was," answered the Prince, falteringly.

"She had a protegee," resumed Jacques; "ayoung girl; whom she had adopted when quite a child!"

"Beatrice! the beautiful Beatrice!" observed D'Orleans, with impassioned accents.

"That was her name, Highness! Did the Baroness ever tell you that young girl's history?"

"I had it from the lips of Beatrice herself! Her mother died one night from exhaustion—at Fontainebleau—at the Baroness' door; she was on her way to Paris—to seek the tomb of her husband—and had travelled from somewhere near Tours on foot! This is all I know!"

"The Baroness, nay the girl herself, knew no more," said the spy; "her unhappy parent—" here he became deeply moved, and sobbed audibly—"expired before she could relate her tale of woe and suffering! The blessings of Her children attend the Baroness' soul in Paradise! She gave my mother Christian burial!"

For a moment the Duke de Chartres stood as one paralyzed, gazing at Jacques with vacant air and changing countenance, his whole frame trembling with agitation; at length he said, or rather stammered out:

"Is this truth; or but a tale of thine own inventing?"

"Truth! truth, Highness;" gasped the spy, his large chest heaving convulsively; "the mother of Beatrice was *my* mother; Beatrice is my sister!"

"Jacques!" exclaimed D'Orleans, seizing the man's hand, and pressing it with ardour; "believe me I knew it not! I have wronged thee."

"Thou hast, Highness!" responded Jacques, withdrawing his hand from the Prince's grasp.

"And thou hast sought me to demand reparation," continued D'Orleans; "I understand!"

"Reparation, Highness! What reparation would'st thou offer to a brother, after thou hast destroyed his sister's honour."

"I will forget my rank, my station, my royal blood, and for the time descend to thy level; with equal arms, I will meet thee on the field, and thou shalt have fair opportunity to avenge thy sister's wrongs! I have injured *thee*; I have injured *her!* but before God, I swear I loved her! Speak, Jacques! Is there any other satisfaction thou would'st have?"

"And dost thou think, Highness," responded the spy, "that thy blood can wash out the stain upon my poor sister's name? Can thy life restore her to purity? Will thy last breath save her heart from breaking? No, no, Highness; no! the satisfaction thou offerest me is none! The impulse that warmed thee to offer it was generous;

noble; but thou canst not repair the wrongs thou hast inflicted upon her and me."

"True, true, Jacques," ejaculated D'Orleans, after a brief pause, a tear starting to his eye; "but other atonement than this it is out of my power to make! Give me thy hand! I offer thee my friendship!"

"There is my hand, Highness, in token of my forgiveness," replied Jacques, placing it in that of the Duke, who again pressed it fervently; "thy friendship I do not ask!"

"Nay!" observed D'Orleans, with an air of wounded pride; "dost thou refuse it? It is a Prince's!"

"I know it, Highness, and therefore may not be accepted! The experience of others has taught me the danger of such a gift!"

"Canst thou not take my word of honour, in earnest of my sincerity?" asked D'Orleans.

"Yes, Highness!" answered the spy, proudly; "but I would not barter *my* honour to gain the friendship of a King; still less if that King had injured me!"

The magnanimity of the reply, not less than the severe rebuke it conveyed, struck the Prince dumb; he felt lessened in his own esteem, and that the lowly-born individual before him, whom he had so deeply wronged, was in soul immeasurably above him; he hesitated whether to change the subject to the more immediate object of the spy's visit, or to press his amity upon him under another plea; he decided upon the latter.

"Jacques," said he; "I deserve thy contempt! Thy revenge is indeed magnanimous! But although thou contemnest my friendship, as any atonement for the injury I have done thee, thou wilt not scorn it as a slight token of the gratitude I owe thee for the service thou didst once render me upon the Pont Neuf! I owe thee my life!"

"Name not the circumstance," responded Jacques; "I recognized thee not at the moment, and would have succoured any other stranger with equal promptitude! Had I known then of my sister's shame, and that thou wert the perpetrator of it, I might, perhaps, have allowed the robber's steel to avenge my Beatrice's wrongs! Ah, Highness! Was it an act worthy a Prince, to conceal his name and rank from a poor orphan girl, in order the more securely to win her affections?"

"Stay, Jacques, stay!" uttered D'Orleans, interrupting the spy; "I loved Beatrice with all the ardour of a first and virgin love; If I concealed my name and rank from thy sister, I did it also from the old Baroness, whose long retirement from court and secluded life, by precluding the possibility of her recognizing me, favoured the deceit I practised upon her! But even this was the result of accident! I was hunting in the forest, accompanied only by two attendants, and was overtaken by a violent storm, from which I took shelter in the Baroness' house! There was no necessity for disclosing my name, wherefore I assumed one! I saw Beatrice! I loved her! The next day I returned; and the next; and the next! I could not resist the impulse of my passion! What shall I say in extenuation of my conduct? That having introduced myself under a feigned name, and having gained

thy sister's heart beneath the disguise, I had not courage to throw it off! We loved! Thou knowest the rest!"

"Not all, Highness! Go on!" remarked Jacques.

"Well!" resumed the Prince; "the Baroness died, bequeathing the half of her property to the convent at Moret, and the remainder to Beatrice, who, discovering at length that I deceived her, though still ignorant of my rank, made over her legacy to the same convent, and retiring there, took the veil. From that hour she has been lost to me."

"Hear the sequel, Highness," said Jacques, growing every moment more intensely moved. "Beatrice took the vow of chastity ere she was aware of her position! Too soon, however, she became sensible that there would be a living proof of her weakness and her dishonour! She concealed the fact from the sisterhood, until she perceived the impossibility of doing so longer. Disguising herself as well as she could, she effected her escape from Moret, and fled, on foot to Paris, in search of her betrayer; of *you*, Highness! How she ever reached this city, alive, or without suspicion, is a mystery! But reach it she did! For two days and an entire night, she wandered about, without a home—without a friend—without a hope! On the second night, despair drove her to self-destruction—"

"Great God!" ejaculated the Prince, clasping his hands in an agony of grief, whilst the large tears rolled down his cheeks; "what have I done?"

"But—" continued Jacques, scarcely less affected—"a noble hand was stretched out to save her! At the risk of his own life, a stranger rescued her from the death she sought, and restored her to the arms of one whom she knew not to be in existence—to mine—her brother's—"

The spy stopped, for his articulation grew indistinct, his efforts to suppress his sobs increasing his agitation; the Duke, meanwhile, incapable of uttering a syllable, seized Jacques' hand and pressed it in silence within his own, his tears falling upon it, hot and scalding. Jacques' communication cut him to the heart, bursting upon him, as it did, in the midst of a scene of mirth and revelry, life and hilarity; the contrast was too painful to be dwelt upon, and the really fine sensitiveness of his nature, obscured and deadened by evil precept and pernicious example, shone forth for the time with all its native brightness.

But this was not the only contrast that presented itself to his mind: he thought of the love he bore towards the unfortunate Beatrice, and of his entire lack of affection for the Duchess of Chartres, his wife; to whom, indeed, he had been united, against his will, and only to further the calculating policy of his uncle, which consisted in consolidating the interests of the Bourbon branch by inter-family alliances; he remembered the pure devotedness of Beatrice to him, and placed it in opposition with the cold, selfish attachment of Louis' daughter; the innocence and beauty too of the former yet entranced his warm imagination, casting the blandishments of Mademoiselle de Blois entirely into the shade; every sympathy of his heart was enlisted in favour of his first love—every disagreeable reminiscence ob-

truded itself, when he reflected upon his matrimonial connexion with the Duchess; he hated the long prospect of domestic infelicity before him, the evils of which he already experienced, and pined for the happiness that he might have enjoyed, could Beatrice have become his bride; she was, besides, a mother—with the knowledge of this fact—a new passion sprung up in his heart—all his dormant love returned—one desire alone absorbed his thoughts: she lived—he would see her; again embrace her cherished form, and imprint a parent's kiss on the lips of her smiling infant; with reflections such as these his heart was rife; they rushed upon him with the rapidity of light, nor did he seek to stem the tide; but, during the short pause that ensued, allowed it to flow with its natural impetuosity.

"Jacques," sobbed he, as soon as he had somewhat recovered; "restore her to *me* also—let me see her—does the infant live?"

"Both mother and son have been spared, Highness," responded Jacques, returning the pressure of the speaker's hand.

"Thou hast not told me the name of their saviour," continued D'Orleans, inquiringly; "was it thou?"

"It was a young officer who serves in your Highness's corps—the Musketeers; St. Marcel le Trouvé! 'Twas he saw her clinging to the wheel at the miller's bridge, and plunged after her. This occurred on the night of the seventh of December last. The shock brought on premature travail—before the morning she gave birth to the child that will one day call thee father! She has not recovered from the effects of that dreadful night; indeed, I fear she never will. Her heart is broken, Highness; and 'tis thou, thou who hast done this! I gathered from her, sufficient facts to give me a clue to her betrayer—"

"Where is she, Jacques?" asked the Prince, impatiently; "bring me to her, at once—lead thou the way, I will follow!"

"Not so fast," remonstrated the spy; "thou canst not see her to-night! Besides, I have other business on hand! To-morrow night, if thou wilt, I will conduct thee to her!"

"To-morrow be it, then, friend," replied the Prince; who, perceiving that Jacques was resolute, felt the uselessness of insisting further; "till then I shall not rest!"

"There is one condition, Highness, which thou must pledge thy word to observe, ere I consent to fulfil thy wish—"

"Name it," ejaculated the other; "I consent before-hand!"

"Secrecy!" answered the spy.

"I swear it!" was the Duke's reply, elevating his right hand above his head; "where shall I meet thee?"

"At the *Cep-de-Vigne*," responded Jacques; "where thou wert this afternoon; come alone; and disguised, to avoid suspicion!"

"At what hour shall I be there, Sieur Jacques?"

"At midnight, Highness! Ask Maitre Chopin for a draught of wine, and drink to the health of Julian! He will understand the signal!"

"Count me already there," answered the Duke.

At this moment the colloquy was interrupted by a roar of laughter in the immediate neighbourhood of the spot where Jacques and

the Duke stood concealed; when it had subsided into a titter, a voice, which the spy immediately recognized, exclaimed:

"News! news from Pandemonium! old, young, and middle-aged; hear the news from the glowing region whose paving-stones are good intentions, and where the houses are built of broken promises; hear the news, hear the news!"

"Highness," whispered Jacques; "let us take advantage of this uproar to steal out unobserved! Do thou go first!"

The Duke placed a finger on his lips, and seizing a favourable opportunity emerged from behind the hangings into the saloon, and mixing with the merry group that formed the suite of his Satannic Majesty, followed the stream until he again fell in with his own party, now on its return from an unsuccessful search in quest of him.

"Whence comes your Highness, pray?" asked De Brancas, somewhat astonished to see the Duke pounce so suddenly upon them; "we have sought you every where! By Jove! you have lost a delicious scene! Our Satan has been intriguing Monsieur D'Argenson until he has beaten him from the field!"

"There is no such thing as dancing for him," observed D'Effiat; "the orchestra plays to idle legs—every body follows yonder droll—women and men, all pell-mell together!"

"Let us imitate the general example then, in order not to look particular," replied D'Orleans; assuming an air of gaiety that he was far from feeling at heart, as he linked his arm into that of the last speaker. "Come Dubois! why art thou staying behind?"

"I will rejoin you, in a moment," replied the Abbé; "I have game in view!"

A rush of new comers separated the speakers; D'Orleans, D'Effiat, and De Brancas being impelled onwards towards the throne, around which his Majesty of the lower states had concentrated a crowd of eager, hilarious listeners, whilst Dubois diverged into the opposite direction, being that of the recess whence he had, unsuspected by him, observed his promising pupil to issue.

"There is some mystery connected with this sudden escape of the Prince from our society," thought he, as he advanced stealthily towards the window; "and though he came out alone from behind that curtain, I warrant me, he did not go there without company!"

Another crowd of masquers at this moment passed by, intercepting the communication between him and the recess; he was, notwithstanding, sufficiently near to see the Grand Inquisitor cautiously quit his sanctuary, and after looking about him awhile, make up to a masquer disguised beneath a grey frock and cowl—who stood concealed behind one of the marble pillars—by whom he was instantly recognized, and with whom he soon became absorbed in an animated conference.

"Hum!" exclaimed Dubois, as the pair mixed with the crowd; "I think I can make something out of this! We shall see!" and with this he departed in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER XL.

HOW DEMOCRITUS ASTONISHED THE COURT OF LOUIS QUARTORZE.

In the interim, the Duke of Chartres, accompanied by his gay companions, reached the dense and continually increasing circle of masquers congregated in the immediate proximity of the throne, who had been attracted thither by the eccentricities of the nameless personage of regal attributes whom nobody recognized, and who, notwithstanding, appeared intimately acquainted with every body, whatever his or her degree.

Armed at all points, invulnerable to every attack, the individual in question successfully rebutted witticism and sarcasm, jest or repartee, how well timed or how smart soever, never failing to turn the tables upon his unlucky opponent by raising a general laugh at his expense, the epigram directed at himself falling absolutely pointless, or instantly recoiling upon its progenitor imbued with three-fold poignancy. He was the life, and soul, and spirit of the party; whithersoever he directed his footsteps, the crowd followed; standing still when he stopped, or, when he advanced, again rushing forwards, pell-mell, amalgamated and jumbled together, without reference to etiquette or rule of precedence.

Never heretofore had such a medley, such a confusion been witnessed in the royal presence. The crush was immense; terrific! Every body pressed forwards to catch a glimpse of the promoter of such unprecedented merriment; and each new-comer, anxious to test the extent and the accuracy of his information, hazarded a question or a remark which almost instantly became the signal for a renewed shout of laughter. In vain the conductor of the orchestra flourished his baton until he grew red in the face; the musicians under his control, wearied of piping to no purpose, laid down their instruments, and looked on, petrified with amazement, at the scene below; dancing being for the time, entirely confined to the inner suite of rooms; and even there, cavaliers gazed vacantly about in search of partners, and after wondering awhile what powerful magnet had drawn these into the grand gallery, themselves flocked to the same centre, and became immediately absorbed in the common vortex.

"You will remember my request," whispered the Prince to his two friends, as, linked arm-in-arm, they pushed through the crowd.

"You have my word of honour for *my* secrecy," replied the Marquis.

"And mine," observed the Chevalier; "the man deserves it for his boldness."

"Where is Dubois, I wonder!" resumed the Duke, looking anxiously about in search of him.

"Oh! never mind the Abbé," responded D'Effiat; "let us hear what this droll is saying."

"He is an extraordinary fellow, whoever he is," said De Brancas, dragging D'Orleans along; "even His Majesty and the grave De Maintenon appear entertained."

"News! news from Pandemonium," exclaimed the personage who formed the subject of the above conversation; "I have news for the young, news for the old, and news for the middle-aged! You husbands who have lost your wife's affections, come to me and I will tell you where to find them! Does no one speak? Alas, then, all husbands are unfortunate alike!"

Here a burst of merriment interrupted him awhile; when it had subsided he resumed:

"Come then, you wives who have faithless husbands and know it not! whisper in my ear and I will tell you the name of your rivals! What? not a word! Beware then, husbands all; and close the doors of your house against handsome cousins, and foster-brothers fresh up from the provinces! Young maidens, who are on the look-out for lovers, I have advice for you too! Come to me and I will instruct you how to ogle, and smile, and play the simple! I will teach you how to make secret assignations at Nôtre-Dame—and how to cheat the vigilance of parents and guardians, devout old grand-mammas and bewrinkled, bead-telling duennas! Courtiers, come to me, and I will show you how to fawn, and cringe, and to fashion your countenances to suit every emergency! Judges, advocates, and men of the long robe; a word in your ear! Here's the rich man's bribe to purchase law, and the poor man's fee to purchase justice! Shut your eyes and hear the case, and I will tell you which shall have the most for his money! News! news! hear the news!"

Probably the grotesque news-monger would have continued his harangue much longer, but at this moment his eyes rested upon a knot of three females, disguised and closely masked, who stood conversing apart from the principal group of which he was the centre; quitting his own circle, he immediately advanced towards the smaller one in question, and fixing his gaze upon one of the ladies—the most animated of the trio—made her a formal bow, and at once addressed her:

"I know you, fair Mask," said he.

"Indeed!" replied the lady, disguising her voice; "I very much doubt it!"

"I will tell you a secret or two shall prove it," continued he. "You are beautiful."

"Hum!" retorted she, unfolding her fan, for the purpose of better displaying the symmetry of her hand and wrist; "there is no lack of beauty at the court; so for once, Sieur Demon, you may have guessed aright!"

The King, who was so situated as to be able to over-hear every word of the conversation, and was, moreover, acquainted with the lady who maintained it, appeared greatly delighted with this little

comedy, and laughed heartily at it, every now and then commenting thereupon to Madame de Maintenon; the latter, however, did not seem to take more than a passing interest in it, being deeply engaged in a colloquy with the Grey Friar, the companion of the Grand Inquisitor.

"Well!" resumed the unknown, returning to the attack; "you are not only beautiful, but young."

"Ha! ha! ha! what woman ever owned to being otherwise?" retorted she; "that is another of your shrewd guesses!"

"You are a supreme coquette," continued he of the tail.

"That is a proof my youth and beauty find a surplus of admirers," replied the lady; "and that I like to amuse myself at their expense!"

"Shall I give you the list of them?" asked his diabolic majesty, whisking his tail about with a careless air.

"Spare yourself the trouble," retorted the fair one; "it would take up too much of your time! Besides; 'twere labour lost! I already know them all!"

"You will not deny that you are rich," resumed the mysterious gentleman.

"I should be sorry were it otherwise," answered she.

"But you did not always enjoy the advantages that wealth confers," observed her tormentor; "you were born poor!"

"Hum!" ejaculated the lady, bridling up and somewhat startled; "perhaps! But I am not a single instance!"

"True, lady! True in a two-fold sense! for single you are not. You are married! Shall I tell you when you became rich?"

"The inference may easily be drawn," retorted the lady, striving to ward off her adversary's repeated attacks by meeting them half way; "I became rich when I took an old husband!"

"Pardon me, Madam," replied the personage with the unmentionable cognomen: "you became rich when your *old* husband died!"

"I wish he were alive again, for your sake; impertinent;" exclaimed the lady petulantly.

"'Tis a charity not to wish him alive again for his own," quickly retorted the imperturbable stranger; "though you would have only paid a fair compliment to departed virtue to wish him back for your's!"

"Indeed!" cried the fair widow, with a scornful toss of the head; "as you choose to observe silence on the score of his faults, pray allow his virtues to lie dormant likewise!"

"Willingly, Madam," continued her relentless persecutor; "for dormant they always were, if report speak truth!"

"You will permit me to *doubt* the truth, Sieur Demon, coming from your lips! Your's are the last from which I should expect to hear it fall!"

"I have told you a few truths, to-night, Madam, notwithstanding! Do you doubt *them?*"

"You surely would not have me confess myself in public!" remonstrated the lady.

"Forbid it, prudence!" retorted he; "your friends would never forgive you!"

The conversation, which had been several times interrupted by the titters of the lady's friends, and the scarcely smothered mirth of the remainder of the assistants, was here abruptly brought to a close by the orchestra, which struck up the prelude to the *menuet de la cour*, a dance of which Louis Quatorze was passionately fond, and in the execution of which he, in his younger days, far surpassed the most celebrated ballet-masters of the period.*

Whilst the symphony was being played, the lady in question turned round to her companions, exclaiming in a whisper:

"Will no one rid me of this pest! Do thou avenge me, my dear Duchess."

"Nay!" replied the other; "after *thy* signal failure, how should I fare? I decline, most positively!"

"Who can he be?" said her other companion; "hast thou no idea, my dear Marchioness?"

"Not the remotest," answered the latter; "he evidently knows *me* well, and I will discover *him* before the evening is out!"

"Pardon me, Madam," observed the last speaker's tormentor, at the same time making her a low bow, according to the very strictest rules; "if you will forgive my *badinage*, which was not intended to offend, I would solicit the honour of your hand for the minuet."

This question appeared to startle the lady more than any circumstance that had yet occurred, for the minuet happened to be a favorite *pas* of her's, and one in which she excelled, it affording her an opportunity of displaying the really symmetrical figure and the voluptuous graces with which nature had endowed her; nothing loth, in spite of what had passed between them, but on the contrary, rather eager to accede to the stranger's request, she placed her hand within his, and arose for the purpose of accompanying him to the spot he had selected, which was immediately in front of the throne; as she did so, she said to him, in a low tone:

"Sieur Mask! you say you know me!"

* Louis excelled in the dance, and until the year 1670, figured with great *éclat* in the ballets given at the court, but at this period, according to Voltaire, he suddenly discontinued exhibiting himself to his courtiers, conceiving it to be derogatory to his kingly dignity. This author asserts, that the monarch's distaste arose thus: Being present at the representation of the tragedy of Britannicus, before the Court F. St. Germains, he was vividly struck with the contemptuous allusion made therein to Nero, and to save his own memory from a similar stigma, at once gave up dancing in public. The last time that he figured in the dance was with the beautiful Duchess de la Vallière, when they executed the *menuet de la cour* together. The quotation that produced such an effect upon Louis' mind is as follows:

"Pour toute ambition, pour vertu singulière,
"Il excelle à conduire un char dans la carrière,
"A disputer des prix indignes de ses mains,
"A se donner lui-même en spectacle aux Romains."

Menuet, derived from the word *menu*, signifying that which is small or minute, was so called from the circumstance of the dance itself being entirely composed of little steps.

"I do, Madam," responded he, in the same low tone; and she remarked that his voice trembled as he spoke whilst his hand slightly pressed her's.

"Who then are you, who have so cruelly held me up to ridicule this evening?"

"I have the privilege of a long acquaintance with you," replied he; "but I do not see how I have scandalized you, unless what I have said be untrue! If true, however, every body must be already acquainted with the facts, nor will your retaining the mask serve any longer to conceal your identity!"

"I confess the justice of the remark," resumed she; "but if you would have me unmask, first tell me my name!"

"Elise, Marquise de Beauvais!" answered her Cavalier tremulously.

"You are right," said the Marchioness, unmasking, and disclosing her lovely features; "and now I know whom you should be, or I am much mistaken!"

"In my ear, lady, in my ear! I wish to remain unknown."

"You are the Chevalier de Mont-Fleuri," replied she, whispering his name in his ear; an eloquent glance of recognition passed between them, and the colloquy ceased; the oddly-assorted couple taking up their position for the minuet.

This dance is of all others the one that requires the greatest amount of ease, grace, and elegance in its execution, and is, for this reason, the most difficult of acquirement, and when acquired, the most difficult to tread with the majesty that is so peculiarly its characteristic. The stately, measured movement—the neatly-executed, minute steps—the well-poised body—the gracefully-advancing shoulder, as the dancer moves to the right or to the left—the elaborate and frequently-recurring salutation—the natural, unconstrained position of the arms and the hands—even to the expression of the countenance, in order to its due accordance with the character of the music—all these are so many studies, the harmony of which—to render the dance perfect—should not be disorganized by any accidental defect of limb or other personal disadvantage.

Possessing every grace, natural and acquired, with the most refined taste; moving a king; and in every respect worthy of the appellation; conscious too of his superiority; it was perfectly in keeping with the customs of the age, with the mode of his education, and with the majestic character of the minuet itself, that Louis Quatorze should become so passionate an admirer thereof, and so proficient in the execution of the same; and that in after years, though he had discontinued to figure in it, he should still delight in witnessing it elegantly trodden. When, therefore, the grotesque individual named, led forth the young and beautiful Marquise de Beauvais, the contrast of costume exhibited, was too striking not to excite his smile, and he looked forward to the result, with as much anxiousness as though the fate of his empire depended upon the first false step the male partner should make.

Notwithstanding the quaintness of the dress that the latter had thought proper to adopt, it was rich in the extreme, being made entirely of the finest black Genoa velvet that could be purchased, fitting close to his faultless though slender limbs, and wholly covered with scales of various hue, from bright crimson to deep blue, wrought in floss silk; the wings, which reached to below the calf of his legs, and were attached in some imperceptible manner to his shoulders, so that he could expand them at pleasure by slightly moving his arms, were constructed of feathers dyed jet black, tipped with red, of which latter colour was the dorsal continuation of his costume, projected to an extreme length, and further ornamented with a gigantic rosette of white satin; he wore close-fitting shoes of red velvet ribbed with black, terminating in a point, and his head was encased in a hideous mask of a brick-dust colour, adorned at the summit with a pair of long, pointed horns, curved backwards.

His partner, now unmasked, wore a skirt of white satin elaborately embroidered with flowers of gold, and over it a *jupe* of blue velvet, her bodice being of the same material, lacing up the front, and fastened by a girdle; the sleeves, full to the elbow, were slashed with white satin, and trimmed with a deep bordering of rich lace, the latter overhanging her snowy, beautifully-proportioned arms, and depending as low as the wrists, which were enclasped by diamond bracelets of great price; she likewise wore a stomacher of the same precious gems, and a large *solitaire* fastened round her throat by a narrow strip of black velvet; white satin shoes with tiny, round, diamond buckles; on her head, a small *chapeau à la marquise* ornamented with three ostrich feathers, and confined at the side by a clasp of brilliants, her splendid hair falling in graceful, natural tresses over her white throat and shoulders, completed her elegant costume.

The various movements of the minuet are too well-known to render any detail necessary here; suffice it to say, that the incongruous pair went through every figure with the greatest precision and elegance, receiving—as was the custom—the repeated and well-deserved plaudits of the spectators, not one of the least delighted of whom was the Grand Monarque himself, who on more than one occasion, cried out "*bravo Belzebub,*" and laughed more heartily than any body to see the grace with which the scaly stranger manipulated the ungraceful appendage which formed the climax of his eccentric costume, sometimes holding it in one hand, after the fashion of a lady holding out her skirt, and at others subjecting its flexibility to the severest tests by whisking it about in various directions, and with more or less vivacity, according to the slowness or the rapidity of the measure they were treading. When the dance was ended, the lady resumed her mask, and after they had made an obeisance to the monarch, was conducted by her cavalier to the seat she had occupied in the earlier part of the evening, he taking up a standing position close beside her, and for the moment forgetful of his identity with a certain individual, chatting cosily with her and with every body around.

Lancerin habillé en d'Artagnan costume du plus bel effet
sous Louis Quatorze.

LONDON: J. C. NIMMO & BAIN, 14 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C. 1885.

Meanwhile, apart from the inter-intriguing of individuals, scenes of a totally different character, and replete with interest of a very different nature were enacting in various parts of the Grand Gallery.

In the suite of Madame de Maintenon, though not appertaining thereto, figured a female of tallish stature, closely disguised beneath the habit of a white nun; she seemed not to—indeed did not—take any interest in the general mirth, but stood or sat, motionless as a statue, close to Madame de Maintenon, who from time to time addressed her soothingly, as if striving to alleviate the mental anguish her fair companion was suffering. Shortly after the dancing commenced, an officer of Musketeers, in full court-dress, but having his face masked, came up to her, and addressing her in tones of great respect, and with a tremulousness of manner that almost alarmed her, said:

"Excuse me, fair nun; I would not presume to address you, but that I fear no other such favourable opportunity may present itself, for some time to come!"

The nun drew her veil closer about her person, and hesitatingly replied that she "had not the honour of recognizing the person who had spoken, whom she entreated would leave her."

"Nay, Mademoiselle," continued the stranger; "I know you well! I have only just now learnt of your being here! You are Mademoiselle de St. Auney!"

Jeanne, for it was she, started on hearing her name pronounced, and hastily answered:

"Whomsoever you may be, Monsieur, I beseech you not to breathe my name here! Your voice appears familiar, but I cannot say where—"

"Do you not then recognize me, Mademoiselle?" asked the first speaker, in a tone of disappointment; "has an absence of five weeks so altered me?"

"Ah!" ejaculated Jeanne; "I know now! You are the Sieur St. Marcel! I did not remember your voice at first! But how did you learn I was here?"

"From our friend Jacques, who is also at the Masque to night! He merely mentioned where I should find you, after giving me a clue to your costume! Have you any objection to take a turn through the apartments? I have only a few minutes to spare, and much to say to you! If you will so far honour me—"

Jeanne turned round to Madame de Maintenon—whose eyes St. Marcel immediately perceived to rest upon himself—and after a minute's deliberation with her, expressed to the young man her readiness to accompany him.

"I am so surprised, so overjoyed to see you again," said he, as she placed her arm within his, "that I cannot find words to express my feelings. I am actually quite bewildered! When Jacques informed me you were here, I prevailed upon a brother officer to mount guard for me whilst I came to you! Ah, Mademoiselle! this pleasure is indeed an unexpected one!" and he—perhaps involuntarily—pressed the hand of the maiden to his heart, which throbbed fiercely on the

contact, driving his blood rapidly through every vein, and rendering each pulsation audible. "I fear," continued he, "you have suffered much since I saw you last!"

"My sufferings, Sieur St. Marcel, have been chiefly mental! The fate of my poor father, and that of my dear innocent Julie, fill my heart with bitterness! Ten weeks now the poor child has been deprived of her liberty; my father more than nine; and I fear there are no hopes of procuring their release for some time to come!"

"But the King! but Madame de Maintenon," observed St. Marcel.

"Have done all they could! Madame assured me only this morning, that she had again solicited his Majesty's interference, but he peremptorily refuses to intermeddle with matters that, as he says, are within the special province of the Lieutenant of Police: though what either my father or Julie have done to merit such treatment, only Heaven knows! However, she says she will leave no stone unturned to procure their liberation, and with this assurance I am still compelled to linger, buoyed up with false hope, from day to day! Have you any tidings to give me of them? The last I received are dated three weeks back—they were then well—but sighing after their liberty!"

The poor girl's tears flowed fast as she spoke, and with the greatest difficulty she suppressed her sobs; whilst St. Marcel, who was equally as affected by her tale of woe as by her grief, silently pressed her hand, in vain striving to overcome his own agitation.

"I have had news since then," said he, in reply to her last inquiry; "but only a week later! Poor St. Leu!"

"Another victim!" ejaculated the maiden; "what of my sister and my father? what of St. Leu?"

"Your sister was well, and your father also, as far as St. Leu knew; for you must know he too was incarcerated in the Bastile, from which he contrived, at imminent risk, to effect his escape! It was from him I obtained intelligence of your father and of Julie!"

"Heaven's will be done," ejaculated Jeanne; "it is a sore trial! But poor Leon! what crime had he committed?"

"Well, I believe I am in a great measure to blame!" answered St. Marcel; "but the circumstance was involuntary, and arose out of the theft of the ring, which you doubtless remember! It is, however, too long a tale to tell now! I will take advantage of the earliest opportunity you afford me to inform you of every thing! For the present, St. Leu is safe!"

"Where is he?" inquired Jeanne; "if 'tis he has escaped, I have heard the circumstance mentioned, though not his name, and I know that the most active exertions are being made to discover his lurking-place!"

"I need not fear to confide in you, who are almost his sister," responded the young man. "After his escape, he took refuge at an honest blacksmith's in the *faubourg* St. Antoine, who contrived by a subtle artifice, though a dangerous one, to pass him through the Porte St. Antoine with the very guards who came in search of him! Late as

it was, he made the best of his way to our Commandant's, where he arrived half-dead with cold, wounded, and lacerated! He is still there; but dangerously ill! We have, notwithstanding, taken every precaution to baffle D'Argenson's agents, and unless you, or *I*, or the Commandant, or one of his domestics betray him, he will remain there quite secure until he has perfectly recovered! After that we shall see! And now of yourself, Mademoiselle! Believe me, the subject is one dearest to my heart!"

"Ah, Monsieur St. Marcel," responded she; "I do not know why we should be thus persecuted! Monseigneur D'Argenson is a wicked man, and is in league with others—though I know them not—as wicked as himself! Jacques told me how, after entrapping my poor sister, they sought to ensnare me also! Thank God! he discovered their artifices in time to save me from the frightful destiny that awaited me!"

"Jacques also informed me, Mademoiselle," replied St. Marcel, "of your being forcibly abducted from home, and how he rescued you from the convent of the Sisters de la Madeleine du Trainel, but I could elicit nothing further from him respecting you, although I—I—excuse my temerity, Mademoiselle—but I was driven almost to despair at the thought of losing you."

"Jacques took me from the convent you mentioned," answered Jeanne, with a view to divert the conversation into a channel less fraught with danger to her trembling heart, "to that of the Carmelites, which I entered the very same morning; indeed, within two hours after my escape! Prevôt accompanied me, in order that I might not be entirely alone, and we remained there until about a week ago, when Jacques informed me that it was Madame de Maintenon's wish I should be removed near to her; in conformity with the instructions he had received, we bade the good Superior of the Carmelites adieu, and were installed at St. Cyr!"

"But—" observed the young man, trembling violently, and turning deathly cold; "you—you are not—a—a novice! You do not intend taking the veil—"

"No! no!" responded the maiden; "Madame de Maintenon, who was intimately allied by friendship to my dear mother, thought it better I should be near her; she wished to afford me greater protection; I was prevailed upon by her to come to the masque this evening, and in order to conceal myself more effectually, adopted this disguise! It is, however, a scene of gaiety that ill harmonizes with my feelings! I see every body joyous, mirthful, free—but in the midst of them all—the—the Bastile—and my father—and my sister."

Here she sobbed so vehemently, that St. Marcel became alarmed, and conducted her to a vacant seat somewhat apart from the crowd of masquers; sitting down by her side, and still detaining her hand, he said, in the warm accents of sympathy:

"I fear, Mademoiselle, that I have caused these reflections to recur to you more forcibly, by bringing the painful subject whence they arise more immediately before you! I am sorry—believe me!"

"Oh, no!" answered Jeanne; "the subject is one ever uppermost

in my mind. I cannot help shedding tears when I think of it—but I am better now. Let us return to Madame de Maintenon; she will, perhaps, feel alarmed at my long absence."

"Must I then," returned he tenderly, and still withholding her hand, though she gently strove to release it from his grasp, "not hope to see you again?"

"Heaven forbid!" responded she, with unaffected artlessness; "I trust we shall meet often again when my family troubles are over!"

"Not before then, Mademoiselle?" continued he; "time has hung heavily on my hands since we parted last, and will hang on them heavier still until I see you again."

The hand he held within his trembled violently, growing feverishly hot and moist. He could see the fair maid's bosom swell and fall irregularly as he spoke. A convulsive sob escaped from her lips, whilst she hung down her closely veiled head, ashamed: she seemed irresolute whether to quit the spot or stay, but after a short pause arose, saying almost inarticulately—

"Let us go back—to Madame de Maintenon."

"I will not seek to detain you, Mademoiselle," observed the young man, rising too.—"yet, listen to me a moment longer! I cannot quench the ardour of the passion with which you have inspired me! If I offend by confessing it thus abruptly, pardon my presumption, but do not scorn me! The feeling is stronger than I! Jeanne! I could die for you!"

There was a fervor, an earnestness in the young man's accents that spoke to the maiden's heart, engendering there a sentiment she durst not baptize: 'twas akin to the warmth of a sister towards a brother, yet something more: friendship seemed too cold a term, and still she dreamt not of love: exist it did, notwithstanding; as he addressed her, each look of his, each word called up this indescribable emotion, which, every time he looked at her or spoke, still gained strength, and appeared to incline her more, and more, and more, towards him; she wept, and knew not why tears bedewed her cheeks; she sighed, yet almost suspected it not; her whole frame trembled; her pulses throbbed with increasing quickness; she was nigh sinking from excessive agitation, and leaned more heavily on him for support: still she only knew he spoke, and that she was listening.

The agitation of the maiden continued to increase; she would fain have quitted the spot, but stood powerless, as if rooted there; in a choked, sobbing voice, that did not rise above a whisper, she exclaimed, or rather stammered:

"Let us return—I beseech you."

"Mademoiselle de St. Auney," responded he, scarcely less agitated than the lovely girl at his side; "I do not know whether I have—I hope I have not—misinterpreted your sentiments towards me—your looks—your smiles—your present agitation; if I have—undeceive me! I am no trifler myself, and feel assured you are not one of those who delight in gratifying their vanity at the expense of a man's affections! Speak then, I implore you—a word—a sign—but let me know—"

The phrase remained unfinished, for the hand he still held clasped, tremblingly, almost imperceptibly, responded to the pressure of his own; light as that touch was, its effect was electric, causing the hot blood to mantle to his brain, and rush back in a wild tide through every vein, increasing the palpitations of his heart until it seemed on the eve of bursting with joy within his bosom; closer to it than ever did he press the hand of the maiden, whose eloquent silence he would not for the wealth of the universe, have broken; she was the first to speak:

"Do not," said she, falteringly, "let us remain any longer."

"Thine—thine for ever, dear, beloved Jeanne," answered he, advancing in the direction of the throne; "when shall we meet again?"

"I know not, indeed," was her reply.

"But can you not contrive to see me sometimes?" inquired St. Marcel.

"I can engage to do nothing," responded the maiden; "I am entirely under my protectress' control for the present, and cannot promise to take a single step without first informing her! Be assured, that when we do meet again, it will be under her auspices, and I hope under circumstances."

"Heaven grant it!" replied St. Marcel.

At this moment his quick eye rested upon theAbbé Dubois, who was engaged in intimate conference with D'Argenson, the pair having retired into a nook in order to converse more at their ease. Desirous of avoiding the observation of the latter—under whose orders he had been placed for the evening, and who would have been certain to recognize his costume—he whispered to Jeanne, and accelerating his pace, pushed through the crowd, and soon gained the spot she had so lately quitted.

"Adieu, dear Jeanne," said he, once more pressing her hand; "you have made me to-night the happiest being here!"

"Adieu! St. Marcel," answered the young girl, responding to the silent token; "for Heaven's sake! return to your duty, lest your absence be discovered, and you should be involved in trouble!"

Raising his hat, St. Marcel bowed, and whispering "to our next meeting, Jeanne," slowly took his leave.

Let us now return to Dubois, who, after encountering Jacques under the circumstances already mentioned, hurried off in quest of D'Argenson, who, incensed at being made the subject of public ridicule, had quitted the Gallery, and was now cooling down his wrath in the ante-rooms. A long time elapsed, however, before the designing Abbé found him, so great was the press of masquers, and so continual the bustle and the confusion amongst them: having fallen in with him at last, he whispered something in his ear which caused the Lieutenant's keen eyes to light up with savage joy, and a hideous smile to distort his countenance:

"Say'st thou so, indeed!" said he; "bring me to him!"

"This way, friend D'Argenson;" replied Dubois; "mind; I only think! I won't assert positively; but 'tis most likely!" and he led the way to the spot where they stood when St. Marcel descried them, carrying on a colloquy with him in whispers.

"Well! well!" ejaculated D'Argenson, impartially, when they reached the nook in question; "show me; *sang dieu*!"

"Say 'tis a bargain then," observed the other; "I sadly want money, and the Duke's exchequer is always low!"

"It is a bargain," retorted the other; "provided it be as thou say'st!"

"A thousand crowns, mind," said the other; "to be paid by to-morrow, noon!"

"Yes! yes! *mort dieu!* is not my word sufficient? there's my hand upon it! But show me! show me!"

Dubois whispered a word or two in his ear, and D'Argenson's eyes immediately rested upon the group indicated.

"Good!" said he; "good! Do thou rejoin thy party; I will soon satisfy myself!"

With this the honest couple moved off in opposite directions, D'Argenson towards the door, and Dubois towards the Duke and his companions.

"Where on earth hast thou been so long?" asked D'Orleans as the Abbé sidled up to him; "I wanted to speak with thee! Thou wilt not mention to D'Argenson what I told thee about Jacques! eh! I have reasons for it! I have promised not to betray him!"

"I will *not*, Highness;" replied Dubois, with his customary stammer.

The Duke nodded, and the whole party became once more confounded in the crowd of masqueraders.

Meanwhile, the Grand Inquisitor and the Grey Friar had advanced closer to the throne; as they drew up to it, the latter personage retired somewhat in the rear, so as to be as much as possible hidden from general observation, whilst the Friar, partly throwing back his cowl, and moving the mask from his visage, turned towards Madame de Maintenon and disclosed himself.

"You here, Father!" exclaimed she, concealing her astonishment; "how didst thou obtain admittance?"

"Our friend Jacques' address;" responded he.

"But the danger! D'Argenson!" said she.

"D'Argenson is a traitor!" replied the Friar, resuming his mask; "but for his treachery, which has been nigh proving fatal to our project, neither I nor Jacques would have ventured hither this evening."

"What has happened then?" asked Madame de Maintenon.

"You received a letter from me on Thursday last," observed the holy father.

"Yes! the news from Rome and from Madrid," replied she; "I am much perplexed what course to follow; I expected to hear again from you as you promised!"

"The couriers who brought the news, were arrested by D'Argenson, their despatches taken from them, opened, and detained by him! His agent, however, a friend of Jacques, made Jacques acquainted with the purport of these despatches, so that D'Argenson has been himself deceived! I could not tell you all this in my letter, and waited to write to you again, until further intelligence reached us from De Janson or De Harrach! A courier has arrived to-day from Rome! Thanks to Jacques' precautions, his despatches are safe here!

It was to acquaint you with their contents, and to resolve upon a decisive step that we came hither. Whatever happens, D'Argenson must not, for Jacques' sake, as well as for that of his informant, know how we obtained intelligence of the former epistles, or the failure of our project will be the consequence of our indiscretion."

"Is Chamillart acquainted with this abominable wretch's proceedings?" asked Madame de Maintenon.*

"He is," replied Father Simon; who, as will have already been guessed, was the Grey Friar.

"What is to be done?" exclaimed the other; "we are not safe!"

"We must act promptly, Sister;" the Friar spoke spiritually; "first take cognizance of the intelligence I have obtained to-day, and then we will decide! Both Jacques and I incur risk of discovery by remaining here, wherefore we must be as brief as possible!"

In a low tone of voice the Father communicated the important information he had received, Madame de Maintenon listening with the profoundest attention; when he came to an end, they relapsed into the conversation already alluded to, which lasted until some time after the termination of the minuet in which Democritus and the fair Marquise de Beauvais figured so gracefully, Jacques still keeping near, occasionally diverting himself by intriguing a certain few of the bystanders, whilst the King, perceiving his consort so deeply engaged, though not suspecting the nature of the subject that engrossed her attention, chatted with such of the members of his family as stood near him.

"Let it be so then," said the Friar, in reply to an observation of Madame de Maintenon; "it is decided; somebody shall be despatched to Madrid forthwith."

"You had better quit this place," remarked she; "D'Argenson is at your elbow, and by his countenance I think he has mischief on foot."

Father Simon looked round and beheld the Lieutenant of Police advancing through the crowd in the direction of the throne; beckoning to Jacques to follow him—who was apparently still intent upon intriguing one of the masquers—he abruptly quitted Madame de Maintenon, and mixing with the company, soon gained the exterior of the Palace, and proceeded to the rendez vous where Jacques and he had agreed to meet.

The spy, however, was less fortunate, for the Lieutenant of Police, who was followed at a distance—in order to avoid suspicion—by a picket of the Musketeers, seeing him about to depart, stopped him almost in front of the throne, with the usual exclamation:

"I know thee, Mask!"

"So do I thee," answered the spy in a counterfeit voice; "and the less any body knows of thee, the better! Let me pass!"

"In the name of the King," shouted D'Argenson—his suspicions amounting almost to certainty—"I command thee to unmask! If thou art the man I seek, thou art a traitor!"

This peremptory order, and the loud tone in which it was conveyed,

* D'Argenson was the first who conceived the idea, and introduced the infamous system of intercepting and opening individual correspondence. The practice is still carried on in France, and the *cabinet noir* is in full operation at the *Grande Poste*.

attracted the notice of the King, whilst the guests rushed in a mass to the spot where stood D'Argenson, face to face with the Grand Inquisitor, the picket of Musketeers that had now come up, forming a half-circle about the latter.

"'Tis not *thou* who commandest here!" replied the spy, boldly. "I shall not unmask!"

A dead silence reigned throughout the saloon.

"Sieur D'Argenson," observed Madame de Maintenon, rising; "this is an unpardonable impertinence; no person has come hither, *save yourself*, but upon *my* invitation! This is surely a sufficient guarantee that there are no *traitors* in the royal presence!"

D'Argenson looked intently at the speaker, and smiled with a mingled air of scorn and gratified malice; his reply, however, was cut short by the King, who said, half-aside to his consort:

"If there are no traitors here, the cavalier cannot object to unmask! Monseigneur D'Argenson's zeal for our safety screens him from the charge of impertinence! Sieur Mask," continued Louis, addressing the spy, at the same time inclining his body towards him; "it is our pleasure that you unmask!"

"It is the duty of every loyal subject to obey your Majesty's pleasure," responded the spy; I obey!" and taking off his mask disclosed his features, drawing himself up to his full height, and eyeing the eager groups around him with an air of pride and a calmness of demeanour that perfectly astounded them.

"A stranger!" exclaimed several voices.

"A stranger!" observed the King; "how is this Madame?"

But Madame de Maintenon, perceiving the hopelessness of the case, made no reply, save a look of indescribable mystification that every body, except the Lieutenant of Police, believed to be genuine.

"I arrest this man;" shrieked the latter, scarcely able to suppress his joy; "'tis Jacques, the *mouchard!* I arrest him on the charge of high treason! Guards! do your duty!"

"Take him away," exclaimed the King; "and let the dancing continue!"

"Don't give yourselves the trouble," said Jacques, shaking off the soldiers who attempted to seize him; "I will follow you!"

"Fall in!" cried D'Argenson; "take him to the *Salle des Gardes!* You answer for him with your lives! *sang dieu!*"

The soldiers obeyed, and Jacques, perfectly unmoved, and collected, was at once conducted to the *Salle des Gardes*, the Lieutenant of Police bringing up the rear.

As the party left the Gallery, they encountered D'Orleans and his companions, whom the extraordinary outcry had attracted from one of the inner apartments; the Duke was thunderstruck, and gazed at Jacques, paralyzed — unable to open his lips; the spy bowed to him, smiled scornfully, and stalked by in silence; but D'Argenson made up to the party, and with a fiendish chuckle exclaimed:

"I told you I should have the laugh of you all! ah! ah! ah! I have got him! *tonnerre dieu!* This time he shall not escape me!" and with this he quitted them.

CHAPTER XLI.

IN WHICH SUNDRY PARTIES FIND THEMSELVES IN EMBARRASSED CIRCUMSTANCES.

ANNIHILATED by the calamity that had befallen Jacques, and almost suspecting one of his companions of treachery towards him, the Duke of Orleans stood rooted to the spot, unable to articulate a syllable, and gazing with a vacant, stupified air, alternately at Dubois, D'Effiat and De Brancas, who on their part—more especially the two latter—were every whit as astounded as himself, whilst Dubois had excellent reasons for assuming an astonishment he did not really experience.

"Which of you have done this?" said the Prince, after a long pause that neither of his friends sought to interrupt.

"Of us, Highness?" observed the Marquis and the Chevalier, simultaneously, and emphasizing the pronouns.

"Of us?" echoed Dubois, laying his hand on his breast, and putting on such an air of immaculateness, that could he have beheld his countenance in a mirror just then, he would have been deluded into a belief of his own innocence.

"Of us! of us! Yes! of us—of you!" exclaimed D'Orleans petulantly; "I spoke of his presence here only to you three!"

The Chevalier and the Marquis exchanged glances of astonishment; had they been unmasked, their face would have appeared suffused with the crimson of shame at this indirect accusation; the former drew himself proudly up, saying:

"Highness! this is too much! Did I not pledge you my word of honour to observe secrecy!"

"And I also?" ejaculated D'Effiat; "besides; we were ignorant of this man's identity until your Highness rejoined us! I am really ashamed to condescend to any justification!"

"Aye! but knowing I expected Jacques," continued the Duke, "and not having cautioned you to keep the circumstance secret, might not one of you have whispered in D'Argenson's ear, before I returned? eh? Come! If this is true, I am most to blame, for I should have kept my own counsel! Speak! which of you was it? Whoever it may be must assist me to procure his liberation, for I swore to befriend him, if, through my imprudence he got into difficulty!"

"I trust, Highness," remarked De Brancas, adjusting his cloak, "that my word will suffice! I assure you I am altogether innocent of this affair! If this does not satisfy your doubts, I must beg to decline the honour of your Highness' future friendship!" and the Chevalier bowed to the Prince very stiffly.

"De Brancas expresses *my* sentiments," observed D'Effiat, inclining his head; "I blush to think your Highness should believe us capable of a piece of treachery, worthy only of a *mouchard*."

"And what was there to gain by it?" stammered Dubois, advancing a little.

"True! true!" replied D'Orleans; "I was too hasty! Thy hand D'Effiat! Thine De Brancas!"

"And mine!" cried Dubois; "treat all thy friends alike, or some one *I* know will be jealous!"

"There it is," responded the Prince, holding out his palm to the Abbé; "pardon my petulance, friends! pardon my unjust suspicions! You will acknowledge that the circumstances were peculiar!"

"Very!" remarked the astute Dubois; "but I think I can solve the enigma!"

"Ha!" exclaimed the others, drawing closer about the speaker.

"Yes!" continued he; "in the first place, this man Jacques was imprudent, very imprudent, to hazard his carcase here, where he was certain, very certain, of meeting Monseigneur D'Argenson!"

The trio intimated that they were likewise of this opinion.

"And it is both likely and probable, very likely and probable," continued Dubois, perfectly satisfied with the impression he had created, "that one of Monseigneur's agents—for they are pretty thickly strewn about everywhere—I say it is very likely and probable, that one of these *mouchards* may have suspected this Jacques, and watched him, and recognized him, and—and—of course—you comprehend that Monseigneur could not let such a chance slip! This is my opinion! But mind! only an opinion!"

"Dubois is right," remarked the Prince; "Jacques *was* imprudent—very! Poor fellow! But we must not leave him in the lurch! Come, friends! Let us see whether we cannot concoct a plan of escape, and put him in a position to profit by it!"

"Much obliged!" said Dubois; "I cry off! I don't feel the slightest inclination to visit the Bastile! Besides! Who is Jacques after all? only a *mouchard!* And accused of treason too! Why; we should be compromising ourselves!"

"I must confess," chimed in D'Effiat, "that I prefer Monseigneur D'Argenson's friendship to his enmity—if I may prostitute the term, friendship, so far as to apply it to the sentiments he professes towards me! Let those who choose to put themselves *in* his power, get out of it again themselves, say I! I'll have nothing to do with the business!"

"Nor I," observed De Brancas; "the less we meddle with the affairs of the Lieutenant of Police, the better! Highness! Abandon this project, and let us re-join the dancers!"

D'Orleans, stung to the quick by this indifference, but too proud to let his mortification rise to the surface, remained a moment silent, as if considering the matter, but really to regain his self-composure; having succeeded in doing this he resumed, with more gravity than he usually exhibited:

"I think you are right friends! I possess no claim upon your sympathy in favour of this man, nor has he any upon your friendship! I understand why you dread D'Argenson, and am therefore not surprised you decline to oppose his power in this instance! But I have no such fear! I have no account to settle with this redoubtable character! Go you, then, and re-join the dancers! I will risk everything to

save him; for I do not believe Jacques guilty of treason in any shape!"

"Nay," remonstrated D'Effiat, perceiving the changed manner of his illustrious friend, and exchanging with the Chevalier a rapid, intelligential glance; "if your Highness is resolute, we will accompany you! You shall not have to tax our friendship with insincerity!"

"Certainly not," echoed De Brancas; "we are ready to lend your Highness the benefit of our experience!"

"Oh! by all means!" exclaimed the Abbé, quick to take advantage of the turn of the tide, in order to float himself once more into favour; "let us go with his Highness!"

But D'Orleans' pride was piqued; besides, attributing to its just cause this sudden change in the determination of his companions, he would not condescend to accept their proffered aid; bowing to them with extreme courtesy, but with an iciness of manner that effectually checked their advances, he said:

"No! gentlemen! I would not that on my account you did such violence to your sentiments! I feel obliged for your *willingness* to assist me, but, if you would confer a deeper obligation upon me, you will do me the extreme favour of stopping where you are! I do not require your company!" and casting on them all a haughty, imperious glance, he turned on his heel and left them there.

"Offended!" exclaimed D'Effiat, as he disappeared.

"*Parbleu!* We ought to have gone at first," observed De Brancas.

"Ah! ah! ah!" ejaculated the shameless Abbé; "he'll come round, never fear! I know how to manage him. Come! let us seek Beelzebub! I feel vastly inclined to force *him* to unmask! What say you; eh?"

"Capital!" exclaimed the Chevalier and the Marquis in unison.

"Come along then," resumed Dubois; "I owe him one!"

And away they went in search of the philosopher, whom, however, they did not succeed in discovering; for, ascertaining the cause of the sudden commotion that had just taken place, he slipped away through the dense throng of masquers, and following the Lieutenant of Police and his escort, saw Jacques safely lodged in the *Salle des Gardes*, the doors of which were immediately closed.

Thus precluded from all communication with his unfortunate friend, but determined that he should not be taken away from the *château* without his knowledge, he took up his position behind a huge marble pedestal that supported a magnificent alabaster statue of the three Graces, whence he could see every thing without being seen, resolving there to await the event.

He had not stood long there, when he observed D'Orleans advancing; stepping furtively out from his hiding place, ere the latter got to the door, he laid his hand on the Prince's arm, saying:

"A word in your ear, Highness! a word in your ear!"

"Out with thee!" cried the Duke, impatiently, pushing away the intruder somewhat rudely; "I am in no mood to listen to thy fooleries!"

"Don't forget twelve o'clock to-morrow night, Highness; at

Maitre Chopin's; alone and disguised, to avoid suspicion!" observed Democritus, nowise daunted or offended by the Prince's violence.

"What!" ejaculated the latter; "thou wert listening then?"

"Pleasantry apart, Highness," resumed the philosopher, "I know nothing! If Jacques had not seen you to-night—for he was doubtful of it—I was to give you a certain message—"

"Art thou a friend of Jacques'?" interrupted D'Orleans; "but what a question!" resumed he a moment after, smiling at his own simplicity; "thou must be; or he would not have trusted thee! He told me he had a friend or two at the masque! Where is the other? Tell me quickly, for we must not abandon him in this emergency."

"St. Marcel is on duty within," observed the philosopher; "the other friend is already gone! Your Highness and myself remain!"

"And of what use are we?" observed the Duke; "can'st thou not conjure some of thy imps to aid thy friend?"

"If I mistake not," continued the other; "you were about to enter, Highness? Permit me the honour of your arm; I will accompany you! When Jacques sees *me*, he will know there is hope!"

"What dost thou purpose doing then?" asked the Prince, hesitating.

"Nothing at present," replied the other; "circumstances must prompt my invention! Let us not lose time, Highness," continued Democritus pointing to the door before them; "every minute is of importance now!"

The Prince bowed, offering his arm to his st ange companion, and they entered the small ante-chamber adjoining the *Salle des Gardes*.

Here they found assembled, the sub-officers and soldiers belonging to the corps of Musketeers, who did duty at the *château*, the latter apartment being set apart for the superior officers; when the Duke made his appearance, they simultaneously carried their hand to the side of their head; D'Orleans returned the salute, and traversed the room, making for the inner chamber (whither Jacques had been conducted) at the door of which, much to his surprise, he perceived two sentinels posted.

"Your Highness can't go in," exclaimed they, presenting arms.

"Not go in?" said he, falling back.

"'Tis the *consigne*!" replied one.

The Duke made no answer, but was about to grasp the handle of the door: the sentinels lowered their muskets and opposed his passage.

"Very sorry, Colonel," said the first speaker; "the *consigne* before everything!"

The Prince was too rigid a disciplinarian to resist, for he suddenly remembered that the command of the corps, of which he was Colonel, had, for twenty-four hours, been transferred to D'Argenson; he looked at Democritus irresolute; the position was embarrassing: fortunately, however, the ready wit of the latter, sharpened by the perilous situation of his friend, came to his assistance:

"'Tis not against orders to knock at the door, friend?" observed he, inquiringly, and shewing off the elasticity of his dorsal appendix.

The sentinels smiled, and answered negatively.

D'Orleans lost no time in profiting by the hint, but knocked vigor-

ously at the door with the hilt of his sword: a momentary pause ensued, and it was half opened by St. Marcel.

"Ah! St. Marcel! Brave St. Marcel!" exclaimed the Prince. "I enter; but it is contrary to the *consigne*, it appears!"

"Yes, Highness;" responded the young man, confusedly; "Monseigneur D'Argenson's orders were peremptory."

"Are there no means of obtaining admittance?" asked D'Orleans; "I wish to speak with Monseigneur on an affair of moment!"

"Wait an instant, Highness," answered St. Marcel; "I will see!"

The door was again closed, but re-opened after the lapse of a couple of minutes:

"Let his Highness pass!" cried St. Marcel.

The sentinels presented arms, and the Duke and Democritus entered the *Salle des Gardes*.

"I was not aware your Highness was accompanied," observed the young officer, perceiving the Prince's companion for the first time, and hesitating to allow him to proceed.

Democritus glanced at D'Orleans, and whispered a word in the ear of St. Marcel, who instantly held out his hand to the stranger.

The Lutetian brethren understood each other.

At the upper extremity of the apartment, surrounded by a picket of Halberdiers, six or eight in number, stood the spy, boldly erect, with folded arms, and undaunted countenance, who, having divested himself of his disguise, now appeared in his customary rude dress; and opposite to him, but at a respectful distance, D'Argenson, scowling on every body, especially upon the intruders, his dark features contracted and pinched up, and slightly flushed with malign excitement, the officers on duty completing the group.

"Well, Highness? well?" exclaimed the Lieutenant of Police, exultingly, as D'Orleans approached; "we have trapped the wolf at last! *Sang dieu!* 'Twas not without trouble! I suppose you have come to wager me another eleven thousand crowns that he will escape, eh? Or perhaps to move me in his favour."

"Thou hast divined rightly in the latter respect, Monseigneur," answered the Prince, bowing.

"Spare yourself the pains," retorted the other, abruptly; "I long sought him in vain; but now I have *got* him, I'll *keep* him; *tonnerre dieu*! Mind that!"

"But the crime thou hast alleged against him, Monseigneur," is not proved," remonstrated D'Orleans; "he has yet a right to be considered innocent!"

"Innocent!" screamed the Lieutenant of Police; "*ventre bleu!* Innocent or not, he shall to the Bastile this very night!"

"Give the man an opportunity of justifying himself before his Majesty," resumed the Prince; "I can induce my royal uncle to grant us an audience as soon as he retires from the masque."

"I tell you," exclaimed D'Argenson, "that I will see him safely lodged in the dungeons of the Bastile this very night! He shall be hanged within a week! Hanged, Maitre Jacques; hearest thou that?"

The spy smiled scornfully, and shrugged his shoulders, but a close observer might have seen his keen eyes glisten momentarily as they rested upon Democritus.

D'Orleans, who was intensely moved, cast upon the speaker a reproachful glance not unmingled with disgust, for the brutality of this banter roused his anger, though he deemed prudent to suppress it.

"Nay, Monseigneur," said he, in a conciliatory tone; "'tis already near midnight! you are four leagues from Paris—and—"

"Were we forty instead of four," shouted the other, "I would not lose sight of him; *sang dieu!* No, no! He shall not escape from me this time!"

"But, Monseigneur; if I pledge my word for him! Thou wilt not refuse my guarantee for his appearance when thou shalt judge necessary to summon him before the proper tribunal! Come, Monseigneur! Show a little mercy! Mercy is one of the highest attributes of your judicial office!

D'Argenson interrupted the duke by a long, loud, and contemptuous laugh; when it had subsided, the latter, mastering his ire, resumed:

"Well, then, if thou wilt not exercise mercy towards *him*, shew a trifle of generosity to *me*! Remember that Jacques once saved my life—" St. Marcel started—"I owe him a return—let that circumstance plead for him—ask me any service, any thing thou wilt; I here pledge my honour to grant it! I ask this as a personal favour, Monseigneur! Release him! Produce the proofs of his crime, and if—"

"If—if—if—" shouted D'Argenson, interrupting the speaker, scoffingly, and emphasizing each word; "there is *no* if! I can bring fifty crimes against him! *Mort dieu!*"

"Malice may do any thing," retorted the Duke, for a moment forgetting the conciliatory manner he had up to the present time observed; "but should he, by some fortuitous stroke of good hap, prove himself innocent of these—"

"I have fifty more to condemn him," exclaimed the other, exultingly; "aye! and I *will* condemn him! mark that! I have charged him with treason—high treason—treason against his Most Christian Majesty—treason against the state, and hold the proofs—mark that again—the proofs of his guilt!"

Jacques smiled contemptuously.

"No, no, Highness," continued D'Argenson with increasing acrimony; "I have sworn to hang him, and I'll do it! I told you to spare yourself the trouble of interceding for him, but you chose not to listen to me! You ought to have known, long ago, that my determination is not to be shaken; *ventre bleu!* He has bearded me, and braved my power long enough! For fifty thousand crowns I would not set him free! What say I? For fifty thousand! Not for a hundred and fifty thousand; *mort dieu!* I allowed you to enter, Highness, to afford your *protegé* an opportunity of thanking you for your intercession! but 'tis valueless! Not the whining of a thousand friends, not the entreaties of mother, wife or child, shall save his neck from the rope; mark that! He shall hang! hang! And I will go see him! and laugh at his agony! He shall be fed well in his dun-

geon, to keep him strong, and I'll tell Monsieur de Paris not to draw the cord too tight at first, lest he should die too soon! Ha! ha! ha! He has had *his* joke! I will have *mine*! *tonnerre dieu*!"

A shudder, a movement of horror, pervaded the assistants; Jacques alone stood impassible, whilst D'Argenson, having partially vented his rage, began impatiently pacing the apartment.

Taking advantage of the temporary calm, Jacques stepped towards D'Orleans, and extending his hand, said, in a voice that his emotion rendered indistinct:

"Highness! I thank thee for this mark of friendship! I just now did thee wrong, though only in thought, for I believed thou hadst betrayed me! Forgive me; I am convinced of thy sincerity! That I have *been* betrayed, there is no doubt; but yonder craven's dark agents have done it! Spare thy intercession for some one more worthy than I! I would not have thee humilitate thyself further to *him*!" here he pointed to D'Argenson, who having stopped short in his walk, was now staring intently at him, chuckling with savage satisfaction. "If I chose to speak! Highness! 'tis *he*, not *I*, would be proved the traitor; but I scorn to betray a sacred trust, though I might by so doing even save my neck! Let him do his worst!"

"Ah! ah! ah!" screamed the Lieutenant of Police, whose face was now rendered perfectly hideous by the workings of the evil spirit within him; "thou hast cheated me, not once, but fifty times! Dost thou remember the Capuchin? Five louis *that* time! And Maitre Quinault? A hundred thousand crowns, upon a forged bond!"

St. Marcel became visibly agitated, and the perspiration began to roll down his cheeks; Democritus observed his confusion, and placed himself between him and D'Argenson, lest the latter should remark it likewise.

"And the Baron de St. Auney?" continued he: "thou did'st strive to save *him* too! And his daughter; villain! 'twas thou did'st take her from the convent! Did'st thou not, too, speak irreverently of his Majesty's government! Of *me*? Ah! there is something worse than *hanging* and the *Bastile* is there? *mort dieu!* thou shalt have the benefit of both! If I could hang thee a dozen times I would! Where is thy accomplice in the forgery of the bond that thou did'st foist upon Etienne Quinault? What use did'st thou make of the *lettre-de-cachet* I gave thee for the apprehension of the robber who attacked his Highness on the Pont-Neuf? Did'st thou not threaten Maitre Quinault with it, in order to extort money?"

St. Marcel advanced a step for the purpose of taking upon himself his share of the penalty incidental to these accusations, but was restrained by Democritus, who forcibly withheld him, asking him, in a whisper, "if he was mad?" The check operated favourably, though his agitation was extreme, for he dreaded lest any of his comrades present, aware of his rencounter with the Capuchin, should, in consequence of these revelations, obtain a clue to the real facts of the case, and by an unguarded observation, betray, in their sympathy for Jacques, their knowledge of the actual offender. D'Argenson still went on:

"Did'st thou not one day rescue that same Capuchin from my

agents—when on his road to Versailles—whither I knew he was hastening? And yet thou camest to me with mealy-mouthedness and pretended ignorance! I'll be revenged upon thee for all these tricks; *sang dieu*! Not all thy friends shall save thee from the rope! ah! ah! ah! I have a good memory, be assured, and will forget nothing! If there *be* any thing worse than hanging or the Bastile, thou shalt have it, never fear! Thou hast cheated *me*; now cheat thyself of that."

"Hear me once more, Monseigneur," observed D'Orleans, with flushed face and lowering brow; "thy power is doubtless great, but that of his Majesty is greater! I have sued, supplicated, besought thee, when I ought to have commanded! I will not condescend to hold further parley with *thee* on this matter, but at once seek the king my uncle, and solicit *his* interference! But harkye, Sieur Lieutenant! From this hour I am thy enemy! Look to meet me in thy path—me and my friends! I will traverse thy plots, and ruin thy projects by every means in my power! thou art unworthy to wear the cross of St. Marc; and I hold thee henceforward dishonoured amongst all true and loyal chevaliers!"

"I do not want honour, Highness," retorted D'Argenson, with a grim smile; "I abjured it when I accepted the office I hold! Where would you find an honest man to follow a trade like mine? But I am not ashamed of it! I am proud of it! I will make the Lieutenant of Police the most powerful magistrate of the empire, by means no one dreams of: hear you that? And as for honour—bah! *that* for honour!" He snapped his finger here. "Men like me, get on better without it than with it! If I were to ask what your Highness considers honour to consist in, I doubt your ability to answer me! You asked me awhile ago, to be generous! I will! You have told *me* what you considered dishonour to be, I will tell you what I think *honour* is to men like your Highness!"

He drew near the Duke, and nowise abashed by the manifest repugnance of the latter to be in such close proximity, whispered a few words in his ear, relatively to the part he had consented to play in the abduction of Julie de St. Auney. The Prince started, turned pale, then red, then drew his hand across his forehead and exclaimed:

"Sieur D'Argenson, thou hast insulted me!"

"Monseigneur Duc," retorted the other, making him a bow with derisive humility, "I have simply told the truth!"

"I do not know what restrains me," cried the Prince, in a burst of indignation, and apparently fired with a sudden resolution. "Friends," continued he, addressing the officers, "will you see a comrade insulted thus? Seize that man—" he indicated the Lieutenant of Police—"I will hold you harmless, and take upon myself the whole blame! Block up the door so that he effect not his escape, and keep him a prisoner here until I return! Jacques! Be prepared!"

Without waiting to perceive whether his allocution produced the effect he meditated, but listening only to his generous impulse, the Duke drew his sword and advanced precipitately upon D'Argenson, who stood perfectly collected, eyeing him intently, and without stirring an inch from the spot, though the Prince's comrades manifested an

intention of joining issue with their superior, and protecting Jacques' retreat: to their astonishment, however, the latter remained passive, as if an uninterested spectator, through exchanging, unperceived, certain signals with his Satannic Majesty whose tail was now left to hang despondingly upon the ground in order that its owner might be free to employ his fingers.

"Fly Jacques!" shouted D'Orleans, placing himself so as effectually to prevent D'Argenson from following him; "'tis thy only chance."

But Jacques stirred not.

There ensued a movement of surprise and a pause.

"Jacques is wise," coolly remarked D'Argenson, still retaining the same position; "and as for these gentlemen; *tonnerre dieu!* there is not one of them but should rue any violence done to me! Look at them, Monseigneur Duc! They are all your friends! Do you think they go to mass and to confession when they are off duty? And at night! Shall I tell you what they do; But no! that would be useless! You know as well as I do! Who broke open the vintner's store at the Porte St. Honoré, two nights ago, and after broaching all his wine, not only refused to pay him for it, but made him drunk, and beat him well into the bargain? Who broke all the street-lamps in the *Rue Ste. Nicaisse* last week, and killed one of the patrol who interfered to prevent it? Have I not a great respect for the Royal Corps of Musketeers that I do not—in the absence of the *real* offenders—" this was said with peculiar emphasis—"I say, Messieurs, have I not a great respect for your corps that, in the absence of the *real* offenders, I do not, by means of my agents, bring these disgraceful—I beg pardon—these *honourable* proceedings home to some of *you? ventre bleu!* And yet, Highness, you would set them against me? I thought you more prudent!"

Philippe D'Orleans hung down his head, abashed, and the remainder of the group likewise; D'Argenson chuckled, and looked around triumphantly; Democritus gazed abstractedly at the ceiling; Jacques appeared buried in reflection.

This silence, so embarrassing and disagreeable to the majority, was interrupted by the entry of a soldier, bringing a piece of cord.

"The coach is ready, Monseigneur," said the new comer, saluting the Lieutenant of Police; "it waits in the court."

Democritus and Jacques exchanged a glance of intelligence.

"Bind his arms!" exclaimed D'Argenson, pointing to the spy.

Two of the soldiers proceeded to follow their superior's instructions without experiencing the slightest resistance on the part of the prisoner, who designedly appeared to lend himself to the humiliating operation, D'Orleans pacing the apartment the while in the greatest agitation of mind.

"Bind him fast," continued D'Argenson, trying the cord to assure himself of its strength; "tighter! tighter! *sang dieu!* There!" resumed he, when all was done; "escape now if thou can'st; brigand! Ah! I hold thee at last! safe! Let the coach be drawn up to the door!"

The soldiers to whom he spoke shouldered their muskets and departed.

Jacques had up to this moment maintained the same calm, haughty demeanour, nor betrayed the slightest emotion; but all at once his dark eyes gleamed with indignation, his brows knitted together, and the large veins of his massive forehead became surcharged with hot blood, growing nearly purple from the workings of the fierce passions suddenly kindled within him; swelling out his ample chest, he jerked his arms from his sides, and with a loud crack the thick cords that held them confined gave way; to release himself from them was the work of a moment, whilst the action was so unexpected and rapid, that, before D'Argenson or any of the assistants could interfere he stood before them once more free and unshackled.

"Keep *them* for thieves and malefactors," exclaimed he, dashing his bonds down upon the ground in the midst of the astonished group; "if I go hence at all, it shall be free!"

"Miscreant!" cried the Lieutenant of Police recovering his presence of mind, and threatening the spy. "Look to him, guards! surround him closely! he is desperate and not to be trusted! Conduct him to the coach! I will not lose sight of him! *tonnerre dieu!*"

"'Tis thou art the miscreant, Sieur D'Argenson," retorted the spy; "and in thy very teeth I dare to tell thee so! Did I not despise thee as much, nay more than thou hatest me, even *here*, surrounded as thou art by thy guards, I would sacrifice thee to avenge the wrongs of thy innocent victims! But thou art beneath my anger! Look to me, Monseigneur; for I have not done with thee yet! I can spoil thee of thy revenge! Hanging was made for such as *thee*, but not for Jacques!" and with a proud, scornful air, he measured his adversary from head to foot, and turned upon his heel, the soldiers closing about him.

"Never mind his rant," shouted D'Argenson; "I will find a gag for that. To the coach with him! I follow! As for you, Messieurs," continued he, addressing the officers; "you will find silence on the score of what you have heard, better policy than babbling! If *you* prate, so will I! Highness! I have the honour to be your very humble servant!" and bowing to the Duke with an air of studied, ironical politeness, he followed the picket of guards who accompanied Jacques, saying, as he departed, a few words in the ear of the sentinels, and leaving the Prince and his companions in the greatest embarrassment at the turn the affair had taken.

The philosopher was the first to speak:

"Highness," said he in a whisper; "there is no time to lose! Return to your friends; I will see what can be done for Jacques."

Saluting the rest of the witnesses, who stood in a group around the fire, the Duke and Democritus shook hands with St. Marcel, and were on the point of quitting the chamber, when the sentinels outside barred their exit.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked D'Orleans, angrily.

"Don't know, Colonel," responded the vigilant guardian; "Monseigneur D'Argenson's orders are not to let any body quit the *Salle* before one o'clock! You must wait an hour, Highness!"

"What's to be done, friend?" exclaimed the mortified Duke to his

companion; "the guard of the palace is under D'Argenson's command until noon to-morrow! I dare not force the *consigne!*"

"I must get out somehow, notwithstanding," whispered Democritus, pulling D'Orleans by the arm, back into the room; "this is a master-stroke of D'Argenson's!"

"What dost thou purpose doing?" inquired the other; "Jacques is lost unless we assist him!"

"You can be of no possible service, Highness," replied Democritus; "and must be content to remain inactive! The attempt is desperate, but I see only one way! Where does that window look out upon?"

"The garden!" responded D'Orleans.

"Can I gain the great court by the path?" resumed the philosopher.

"Yes! but there is a sentinel at the gate that opens into it!"

"Saved!" ejaculated Democritus, beckoning to St. Marcel. The latter drew up to his friend—who stood somewhat aloof—and whispered a few words to him, out of ear-shot of the Duke.

"But my duty!" said the young officer in reply, his countenance growing troubled.

"Remember the services the Emperor has rendered thee;" responded Democritus; "besides; who is there to betray thee? not I! However," resumed he after a brief pause, "if thou wilt *not*, I must chance it! If I fail, so much the worse for us all, and good night to the Emperor!"

"Thou askest much of me," observed St. Marcel; "but to save the Emperor, there is no sacrifice I would not make! Louis, and Compiègne!"

"Louis! Compiègne!" muttered the philosopher; "good! One question more! How high from the ground is that window?"

"A few feet!" replied St. Marcel.

"Good night then, Marcellus! Your Highness—" here Democritus slightly bowed to the Prince, and hastening to the window, unfastened the *espagnolette*; after looking out and about for an instant, he leaped into the garden, leaving both his companions entirely ignorant of his intentions.

CHAPTER XLII.

VULCAN AND HERCULES GIVE STRIKING PROOFS OF THEIR LOYALTY TO THE EMPEROR JULIAN.

A SIMULTANEOUS movement of curiosity prompted the Duke and St. Marcel to rush to the open casement, whence they beheld Democritus—already afar off—rapidly advancing by a succession of leaps, in the direction of the lateral gate by which the communication between the gardens and the great court was established. Having watched him until his receding figure had become confounded with the tiny trees and shrubs that besprinkled his path, they closed the window,

and refastening the *espagnolette*, rejoined the astonished group of officers within, who were looking at one another in great perplexity, as if seeking amongst themselves for an elucidation of the motive of the grotesque stranger's sudden disappearance.

Both St. Marcel and D'Orleans were too deeply absorbed in their own reflections to heed the nods, and winks, and whisperings that went round, and silently took up their stations at opposite sides of the large chimney; the latter folding his arms, and with one elbow resting on the marble mantel-shelf, gazing abstractedly at his feet; the former staring at the bright flames that flickered in the hearth, fashioning themselves into all manner of strange shapes, and occasionally kicking the crackling logs with the toe of his boot, regardless of the imminent danger of combustion in which the approximation placed this portion of his apparel: the nature of his meditations may easily be divined.

Brought up from almost infancy in the midst of a licentious camp, the child of fate—the shuttlecock of circumstance, St. Marcel's life had been one continued, ever-varying round of dissipation and debauchery; for being endowed with an ardent temperament, and enjoying, moreover, ample opportunity of indulging in sensual pleasures, without having ever possessed that of appreciating the delights arising from more refined entertainments and intellectual intercourse, he gave free rein to his wild passions, and as he grew up to manhood, rapidly became initiated in all the fashionable vices of the voluptuous age in which he lived: gambling, drinking, brawling, feasting and illicit intrigue with the opposite sex absorbing that portion of his time not devoted to his military duties, his many and facile conquests tending to imbue him with unfavourable impressions of the virtue of women in general, whom he judged in a mass, whilst from the very restrictedness of his associations with them, he confounded all with the specimens of frailty he had encountered.

Oh woman! fairest—most beauteous, yet tenderest flower in Nature's human garden—perfection of her works! how unjust towards thee is thy natural protector, Man! So fragile too the basis on which rests thy reputation, that a breath—even the envenomed breath of slander—may overthrow the lovely fabric; whilst for one frail being who loving, errs, all, all are branded, the stain remaining indelibly impressed on the sex entire! Yet; who is thy destroyer? Man! Oh anomaly, indefensible and inexplicable! The innocent lamb, defenceless and wounded, is doomed to sacrifice: the wolf that slaughtered it roams abroad unmolested!

From the day, on which St. Marcel first beheld Jeanne de St. Auney, the film fell from his eyes, and a new world, bright, radiant, and refreshing, burst in upon him all at once. He loved! The nascent passion wrought an immediate change in his habits; excited into action the nobler qualities of his nature, and by rendering him susceptible to the charms of virtue as exemplified in the conduct, manners, and bearing of his heart's idol, led him to appreciate the incommensurable distance that separated her from others of her sex to whose society he had hitherto been chiefly, almost solely

habituated, and shewed him at a glance his unworthiness, tainted and corrupted as he was, to inhale the same atmosphere with one so pure.

The feeling grew upon him in the same proportion as his love; it absorbed his entire existence, gathering fresh strength from contact. In Jeanne the whole of her sex was redeemed, and the sinning were loved for their very frailty; he pitying and compassionating now, those whom erewhile he scorned and despised, though associated with from force of habit. To become worthy of her according to his own judgment, constituted his ambition, and considering the high estimate he had formed of the being he loved, his was no trivial victory to obtain.

Discarding his former connexions—not one by one—but all at once, and irrevocably, he consecrated his entire thoughts to her who was alone deserving of such singleness of attachment and devotedness, panting with desire to hear fall from her lips the delicious truth whose existence he now more than suspected. But at this juncture, so critical for his happiness, she was snatched from him; and in the absence of the new incentive to integrity, it required all the determination of a noble nature to flee the temptations by which he was beset; to withstand the railleries of the dissipated circles he was compelled to frequent, or the more pungent sarcasms of his brother officers, who inferring the cause of the extraordinary and sudden change in the habits of one who had ever been the promoter of ribald mirth and debauchery amongst them, sought in vain to wean him from his new passion, and to drag him back into the vortex of profligacy that was fast engulphing them, and from which he had made so gigantic an effort to escape.

From the period of Jeanne's abduction up to the present moment, he had been unable to elicit any clue respecting her abode from Jacques; whom indeed he had not seen so frequently as formerly, having had heavier military duties to fulfil, whilst the spy always appeared abstracted, and as if desirous of avoiding interrogation upon the subject; great then was his surprise, but greater his joy when, a short time previously to his interview with Jeanne as related, his mysterious friend found means to communicate to him the grateful intelligence of her being present at the masque; he lost not a moment to repair to her side: the result of their unexpected meeting is known.

Certain now that his love for the maiden was reciprocated, delectable visions of future happiness floated before his eyes; as fast as one vanished, his entranced imagination penciling another. One dark cloud alone obscured the warm sunlight that had so unanticipatedly broken in to cheer his existence; the uncertainty of his origin; a circumstance that had never before much troubled him, nor caused him more than a passing regret, since in the absence of parents and relatives, he had found amongst his martial companions a whole colony of brethren. Now, however, his surmises upon this chapter became painful, for his birth might be unhallowed by legitimate bonds, and though he felt that great deeds need not ancestry to ennoble their author, a blush tinged his cheek, whilst honour whis-

pered him, that, on the eve of perhaps contracting an intimate and lasting alliance, it was imperative upon him to acknowledge the painful truth of the dubiousness of his parentage.

He entertained latent hopes, notwithstanding, that a discovery of the secret might reflect honour instead of disgrace upon him—if any honour there be incidental to gentle birth—for the chances were, to say the least, equally divided; and he determined, in the temporary absence of Jacques, forthwith to enlist Democritus into his service, as the most likely person to obtain a clue to the desired fact.

This theme, so suggestive of painful speculation, was abruptly banished from his mind by the keen gaze of the Duke of Chartres, which, on suddenly looking up, he perceived riveted upon him with an indefinable expression of interest. An angry tide of blood rushed into his cheeks, for he thought of Jeanne, and how nearly, but for the providential interference of the spy, she had been falling a victim to the evil designs of her abductors; unable entirely to master the outward expression of his feelings, he averted his eyes, lest they should betray him, and became again apparently absorbed in the contemplation of the fire.

The Prince's thoughts, be it said, had rolled almost wholly upon Beatrice, and upon the extraordinary manner in which, after so long a separation, he was about to be placed once more in communication with her under circumstances so distressing. The remembrance of her narrow escape from an untimely and violent death, filled his heart with gratitude towards him who had proved instrumental in rescuing and restoring her to him, and it was at the precise moment when his mind was dwelling on this fact, that he bent his gaze upon St. Marcel, though he spoke not.

Neither the Prince nor the young man had even hazarded a surmise as to the means Democritus purposed employing to compass the rescue of their mutual friend, whose escape appeared impossible, though they were not wholly hopeless that it might be effected, notwithstanding the risk and difficulty of the enterprize.

Whilst these two were respectively absorbed in their own reflections, the group of officers assembled in front of the fire, perceiving that their superior took no notice of them, carried on the following colloquy in a low tone of voice, as if unwilling to disturb the meditations of the abstracted pair.

"Does any body know him?" asked one, alluding to Democritus.

There followed a general shrugging of shoulders, and a winking of eyes, a stray glance falling upon the Duke and St. Marcel.

"Hum!" continued the same speaker; "I wonder what induced him to fly out of the window after that fashion!"

"Oh! he did'nt like being imprisoned here for an hour;" observed a second; "he will scale the walls!"

"What would he gain by that?" resumed the first speaker; "they are high, and there are the sentinels!"

"He appeared very anxious to get away after Jacques," remarked a third.

"That Jacques is a famous fellow!" observed a fourth.

"Aye! and knows a few secrets I warrant," rejoined the first.

"So does that cursed evil spirit that has clawed him;" said another; "I wonder how he found us out!"

"Bah! 'Tis no great mystery! Has he not spies everywhere?"

"Certes! thou art right," responded his companion; "I wish we had taken his Highness' hint just now! We might have easily revenged ourselves upon him!"

"Nonsense," observed the third speaker; "it would have been worse for us! We are deep enough in the mire; there's no necessity for smothering ourselves! We had better do like the cats—draw in our nails!"

"Ah! bah!" exclaimed the second; "thou art one of the prudent sort when sober, but a devil incarnate at mischief when drunk! Thou should'st have preached prudence to the patrol instead of knocking him down!"

"We are all equally implicated in *that* affair," resumed the last speaker but one, "though 'tis true D'Argenson cannot point out one of us in particular!"

"And what if he could?" asked his comrade; "these trifling occurrences are so common, that even should the affair of the poor devil of a patrol be brought home to us, a month's Bastile, or a fine, would square our accounts with the police. 'Tis not worth troubling ourselves about?"

"Certainly not," responded the others in chorus.

"Isn't it strange St. Leu has never turned up?" said the first spokesman.

At the mention of St. Leu's name, St. Marcel and D'Orleans looked up and encountered each other's gaze, the countenance of the latter becoming much troubled.

"Had he disappeared at night," remarked one; "I should have thought he had been murdered! Poor fellow! I am inclined to believe a *lettre-de-cachet* was out against him!"

"Bah! what for!" inquired another, shaking his head incredulously.

"Who knows?" resumed the other; "may be for that little affair! hum! You know all of you!"

A nod of intelligence passed round; St. Marcel grew agitated; the Duke lost not a word.

"That can't be," said another, in reply to the last observation; "St. Marcel would have disappeared too in that case!"

D'Orleans remarked that the young man alluded to grew very pale.

"It was a sad affair altogether!" remarked his comrade. "By the bye, St. Marcel—" here he turned more towards him—"did'st thou ever discover thy Capuchin? Him of the Pont Neuf! eh?"

D'Orleans started, (though the movement was not noticed) for D'Argenson had given him a different version of this transaction, and induced him into a grave error with regard to the identity of the person who had attacked him; now, however, he became aware of the truth, for St. Marcel turned purple as a boiled beet-root, and averting his eyes from him, stammered out a very irregular affirmative.

"Ha!" exclaimed his comrades in a breath; for they were the Commandant's guests on the night of the duel, and were now naturally interested in the sequel.

"Who was he? Tell us his name!" said one.

"Yes! his name," echoed they all in chorus.

D'Orleans laughed in his sleeve, enjoying St. Marcel's confusion.

"No! no! not now;" faltered he; "I am not in the humour for conversation! Another time! not to night! Besides; the circumstance is none to my advantage."

"Thou should'st relate thy adventure to his Highness," remonstrated his companion; "it would pass the time! There's no danger of his Highness betraying the secret!"

This was said without intention, but came so directly home, that the Duke was compelled to recur to the very ordinary method of stifling a laugh within the folds of his pocket-handkerchief, having carried the same to his face under the ostensible plea of blowing his nose.

"I should like to hear it exceedingly," ejaculated he, as soon as his mirth had subsided; "what is it friend St. Marcel?"

"Nothing, Highness! nothing!" answered the latter, surprised at the Duke's *sang froid*; "a frolic; a stupid frolic; of which I have repented ever since. 'Tis not worth a moment's attention."

"Nay! let somebody relate it," responded D'Orleans, chuckling with delight at the increasing embarrassment of St. Marcel; from whose visage now trickled large drops of cold perspiration.

"Since your Highness insists," observed he, after a very brief pause, striving to assume an appearance of calmness; "*I* will! I know I can calculate upon your Highness' discretion!"

The Duke looked serious, bowed, and answered that "*he might.*"

St. Marcel, fixed his eyes steadily upon the royal listener, for the purpose of noting the effect his narrative produced, and resumed:

"Well, Highness; it occurred on the night of the twenty-ninth of November last! I was on my way to the Commandant's, crossing the Pont Neuf, when I heard hurried steps behind me! I looked back and saw a Capuchin hastening over the bridge. Suddenly he stopped short, took out from his bosom, a purse pretty well garnished already, and deposited something therein! I wanted money! There was no one by! I concealed myself in one of the cabins, and waited till he should pass! Scarcely a minute elapsed ere I heard him again advancing. I rushed out, sword in hand, and bade him stand and deliver—

"What!" ejaculated D'Orleans, affecting surprise; "turn footpad!"

"Even so, Highness," replied St. Marcel, bowing; "it was the act of an evil moment, that the sight of the well-lined purse suggested. But hear the sequel. My friend, instead of delivering, drew a sword, and stood on the defensive! We closed—his weapon snapped, and I was on the point of bleeding him, when my arms were suddenly pinioned from behind, and a voice bade the Capuchin fly! He did not require telling twice, but took to his heels like a greyhound! My

capturer then dashed me violently to the ground, and picking up the broken sword, disappeared also, before I could recognize either!"

"Was this all?" inquired the Duke, with a coolness that perplexed the young officer more and more; "'tis quite *piquant*, I declare! I am desirous to learn the rest!"

"If your Highness *desires* it," observed St. Marcel, "I have only to obey! But—"

"No buts, my friend! go on!" said D'Orleans, anxious to obtain a clue to the affair of the ring, and beginning strongly to suspect D'Argenson of foul play.

St. Marcel continued:

"As soon as I recovered my feet, Highness, I naturally looked about after the strangers; the road was clear! I was going to leave the spot, when I espied the Capuchin's purse lying on the ground! I picked it up, and without staying to examine its contents, made the best of my way to the Commandant's.'

"And then?" remarked D'Orleans, inquiringly.

"Why; I related my adventure to my comrades, who laughed very heartily, and after supper we played for the contents of the purse!"

"Yes!" observed one of the group; "and thou must confess thou had'st more than an honest man's luck that night!"

"'Tis true," resumed St. Marcel; "the ill-gotten booty proved lucky!"

"I am enchanted to hear it," exclaimed D'Orleans, smiling. "Did the affair rest here?"

St. Marcel perceived the Prince's drift, and anxious to procure some positive clue to confirm his own suspicions as to the nature of the intrigue that had ended in St. Leu's incarceration, which, notwithstanding Jacques' hints, he had been unable to fathom—for his inferences did not amount to certain evidence—he determined to conceal nothing from D'Orleans of the occurrences of that fatal evening, and to throw himself upon his clemency.

"The affair did *not* rest here, Highness," continued he after a brief pause; "but your Highness will pledge your word that the circumstances I am about to detail shall not transpire! My comrades are already acquainted with the facts, and sworn to secrecy!"

The crisis was interesting. D'Orleans perceived something more was beneath than he had anticipated, and knowing that he was himself the main-spring of the transaction, of what nature soever it might be, and more blameable than any body, made no scruple of pledging his honour to observe strict silence.

Bowing in answer to the Prince's engagement, St. Marcel took up the thread of his narrative:

"There was in the Capuchin's purse, Highness, besides a considerable sum in gold, a small ring, set with a single diamond! I was examining this trinket, when one of my comrades who entered after me, and was consequently ignorant of my rencounter with the Capuchin, demanded in a peremptory tone how I had obtained it? I felt inclined to treat the matter as a joke, and hesitated, never suspecting how deeply he was interested in my reply.

Again he asked me the question, but this time accompanying his request with a threat. I did not wish to quarrel with a comrade, but the demon of mischief was alive within me, and instead of satisfying him, I threw out an ambiguous hint about a fair damsel! The words were no sooner out of my mouth, than he gave me the lie and called me a coward! The powder took fire! I could not brook the insult! We fought before the Commandant and our companions! St. Leu fell!"

"Ha!" ejaculated D'Orleans, much astonished at the issue of the adventure; "was St. Leu the victim? this becomes serious!"

"Serious indeed," continued St. Marcel; "I was placed under arrest until St. Leu should recover from his wound, and to save appearances, the Commandant reported us upon the sick-list!"

"*Coquin de Commandant!*" exclaimed D'Orleans, sententiously, a smile playing about his mouth.

"He acted for the best, Highness!" resumed St. Marcel; "and at the end of a week I was released! The next morning poor St. Leu disappeared!"

"And has never been heard of since," remarked one of the party.

"And perhaps never will be again!" said a second.

"But the name of thy Capuchin, St. Marcel," exclaimed another; "since thou knowest it!"

"Aye! his name!" echoed the others.

St. Marcel looked at the Prince and observed his countenance to change, whilst a slight twitching of the eye-brows conveyed an expressive hint that he did not wish his identity divulged. The young soldier understood in a moment, and turning towards his comrades, said:

"I am sorry I cannot satisfy your curiosity, my friends! I am under a pledge not to disclose his name!"

D'Orleans thanked St. Marcel with a smile, the others shrugging their shoulders with a careless air, implying their wish not to inquire further into the matter, the two former relapsing into their fit of taciturnity.

Though both were, from different motives, desirous of renewing the colloquy, neither durst do so, D'Orleans for fear of compromising himself further, and St. Marcel because of his connection with Lutetia and Jacques; and both again, lest they should betray themselves to their companions. But these, silenced by St. Marcel's reply, made no attempt to disturb their moody ruminations, and a long and embarrassing pause ensued, the conversation being confined to the group of officers, and carried on in whispers, when the monotony of the scene was diversified by the sudden opening of the door.

"The *consigne* is relieved!" observed a sub-officer, entering. Having delivered himself of this brief communication, he made the military salute and disappeared.

The Duke breathed once more, and prepared to follow the soldier.

"Messieurs," said he, doffing his beaver, "I wish you a very good evening!" At this moment he caught the eye of St. Marcel, and calling him by name, added; "a word with thee!"

Notwithstanding the peculiar tone of voice in which this was uttered, and the urbanity of the Prince's manner, the young man hesitated to follow, for he could not banish from his mind the remembrance of the Duke's intended perfidy towards Jeanne, nor how nearly she had fallen into his power; however, his hesitation was only momentary, and in the anticipation of some new revelation, he hastened after him, and they quitted the apartment together, the circumstance affording to those who remained, food for further comment.

"Friend St. Marcel!" observed D'Orleans, speaking in a half whisper, at the same time tendering his hand and cordially pressing within it that of the young officer; "I owe thee a debt of gratitude which I can never repay! We understand each other!"

"Highness," replied St. Marcel, astounded at this apostrophe, and misapprehending the cause of the Prince's emotion; "I am overwhelmed—I do not comprehend—indeed I do not deserve this magnanimity—I did not recognize your Highness—it was very dark—and the circumstances—"

"Yes!" retorted the Duke, laughing; "rather extraordinary; certainly! But I forgive thee that escapade right willingly, for I was far more culpable than thou! Don't think 'tis for robbing me that I promise thee, henceforth, my friendship and protection! Thou did'st nobly compensate for an act of involuntary treason by another of heroism in risking thy life to save a poor girl's!" St. Marcel started. "Thou art surprised, eh?" continued D'Orleans; "and well thou may'st be! 'tis a service I shall not forget! Let me see thee at the Palais Royal, at noon, the day after to-morrow! I must converse with thee upon another matter equally interesting! Poor St. Leu! I am sincerely sorry for his fate! Would that I knew whither he had escaped!"

Though astonished—astounded indeed—by this communication, and marvelling still at the mysterious enchainment of circumstances that had led to his rescuing the unknown maiden in whom the Duke took so lively an interest—the peculiar character whereof St. Marcel was not slow to conceive—this particular event did not so deeply affect him as did D'Orleans' mention of St. Leu's name in connexion with his evasion, proving the complicity of the former with D'Argenson, and entirely confirming the suspicions he had entertained from the commencement, as to the real cause of his unhappy comrade's imbastilement. Hesitating between his vow of secrecy and his desire to render St. Leu a service, now that he had the opportunity, for only the Duke's interference could protect the fugitive against further pursuit from D'Argenson, St. Marcel remained a moment silent, much embarrassed what to answer, having no other alternative than to divulge all he knew, or to pretend total ignorance. The latter course appeared the more prudent, and he observed it, reiterating the Duke's last word with as great a semblance of surprise as his knowledge of the truth would allow him to assume.

"Ah, yes!" replied D'Orleans; "escaped! from the Bastile!"

"It was thither that he was taken then?" continued St. Marcel,

still prattling about the Prince's credulity. "Was it by your Highness' command?"

This was the precise point it will be remembered, on which St. Marcel most wished for enlightenment; the Duke looked at him very hard for a moment or two, and then answered, in a troubled manner:

"Not exactly—and yet, he was. But D'Argenson misguided me! I have been duped, I apprehend, and done St. Leu great injustice! However, there is yet time to make reparation, and I commission thee to endeavour to discover some traces of our comrade: but let the result of thy researches remain, for the present, a secret between ourselves. I must see D'Argenson upon this matter! Good night! Remember our rendezvous!"

"At the Palais Royal: noon; the day after to morrow!" replied St. Marcel, bowing: "I will not fail Highness!"

D'Orleans smiled and again cordially shaking hands with the young officer, quitted his side, leaving him overjoyed at the change that had taken place in his sentiments, due intelligence of which he now panted with impatience to convey to St. Leu; the more so that he had procured it without breaking his parole to Jacques, or giving D'Orleans room to suspect his sincerity.

In the mean time Democritus was very differently employed.

On leaping from the casement he alighted upon his feet, with the agility of a cat, and bounding across a bed of valuable exotics, young tulips and narcisses, crushing them mercilessly as he fled, and clearing every obstacle in his path, he continued his onward progress in the direction of the small side-gate already mentioned, purposing to reach the great court-yard as soon as D'Argenson; or at latest, before the vehicle containing him and the spy left the same.

The night was excessively dark, for the moon had risen totally obscured by huge masses of heavy clouds, so that his form was scarcely distinguishable from the inanimate objects that surrounded him. Occasionally, however, the reflection from the brilliantly illuminated palace windows streamed full upon him, exposing the peculiarities of his extravagant costume in the most disadvantageous light as regarded himself, inasmuch as his perfect identity with a certain nameless personage could no longer admit of a doubt, but must have impressed any one happening to come upon him unexpectedly, with the most firmly-rooted conviction that he had in fact quitted his remote dominions for a temporary sojourn on earth, and was at that precise moment taking the air in the gardens of the *château* of Versailles.

In his anxiety to reach the great court in time, he almost forgot the gate and the sentinel who guarded it, until his attention was aroused to the fact of the existence of the latter by a stentorian "*qui vive?*" His Satannic Majesty stopped short, in order to procure a sufficient supply of breath to answer, and gathering up his tail, stepped out of the path back amongst the shrubs, as a measure of greater precaution.

"*Qui vive?*" again shouted the guardian of the gate.

"A friend!" replied the other, advancing leisurely in the direction of the voice, dodging amongst the shrubs, for fear of accidents, and suddenly resolving to amuse himself at the expense of the sentinel.

"The pass-word!" resumed the other, lowering his musket.

"Louis!" responded the invisible, taking a stride forwards.

"Stand!" continued the sentinel; "Louis for a friend! The counter-sign."

"Compiègne, and go to the devil!" answered the tailed one.

There was a moment's silence, for the soldier—who, fortunately for the other, chanced to be young in the service—unable to see anything now, and hearing no noise of footsteps, became somewhat alarmed; he shaded his eyes with his hand and peered through the darkness in vain, though the stranger was at that instant standing within six yards of his elbow.

"Advance!" ejaculated he, timidly.

"Good night, friend!" said the unknown bounding to his side.

On catching a sight of the frightful figure at his elbow, indistinctly defined in the gloom, the unfortunate recruit was seized as with a fit of palsy, and trembled so violently that he let his musket fall out of his hands to the ground, his knees knocking together, and his teeth chattering in the most unmusical manner possible, whilst he was totally unable to stir a foot.

"Open that door! I must pass!" resumed Beelzebub whisking his tail, and letting the barbed end tap the soldier on the cheek.

"*Ave Maria!*" cried the terrified sentry, dropping on his knees.

"Did'st hear me?" hissed the stranger in his ear: "quick;" here he struck him very smartly on the arm with his dorsal continuation; "open the door!"

"*Misèricorde!*" gasped the other, falling flat on his face; "'tis only to draw back the bolts, sir!"

This was sufficient for the philosopher, who at this moment heard D'Argenson's voice in the court on the other side, giving directions to the soldiers, and felt there was no more time to lose; showering down upon the prostrate sentinel a succession of raps inflicted with the lithesome adornment already alluded to, he strode to the gate and soon removed the bolts, but had scarcely completed his task than he heard the sound of footsteps, and turning half round perceived the sentinel running away in the direction from which he himself had just come, leaving his musket on the ground and the empty sentry-box to guard the door: laughing heartily at the poor fellow's fright, he pulled the door towards him and entered the court-yard, as the coach containing Jacques and his capturers was leaving the great outer-gate of the *château*.

Taking advantage of the bustle and confusion consequent upon the arrest and the departure of the criminal, Democritus slipped through the crowd almost unobserved, certainly unsuspected, and was soon in full chase after the coach, keeping it in view as it dashed along the main-road, but not diverging himself from the small path, in order to cover his person as much as possible from observation, continuing the chase until they gained a more lonely part of the

grande route, when he darted out, and redoubling his speed, soon came up with the vehicle and seated himself behind, immediately adopting the salutary precaution of doubling himself up into as small a compass as possible.

It may be explanatory to state, that the coach—which was very large, square, and lumbering, and "*on this occasion only*" drawn by three horses, one leader and two wheelers—contained seven persons in all, namely, Jacques, D'Argenson, and five soldiers; the former being seated between two of the latter, with the Lieutenant of Police and their companions facing them. On leaving the *Salle des Gardes*, some little delay had arisen in consequence of D'Argenson's wish to assure himself that the escort's muskets were loaded, as also that a brace of large pistols which he always carried concealed about his own person, were likewise in order. Having satisfied himself upon this point, they proceeded to the door of the vestibule, where another trifling delay took place, the leader in question having turned restive, absolutely refusing to go any way but backwards, rendering it for some time impracticable for the coach to draw up so close to the door as D'Argenson wished.

How much often depends upon trifles such as these!

However; every thing was satisfactorily arranged at last; three soldiers stepped in first; then the prisoner; then D'Argenson; then the two other soldiers; and the postilions were bidden to drive on in all haste to Paris.

The vehicle continued to roll onwards with the greatest rapidity, the horses striking up behind them a shower of sparks with their iron-shod hoofs, and snorting loud and frequently as though they gloried in the excitement and did not feel the spurs or the whips of the postilions; as it rattled along, sometimes leaping with a groan over a large stone, or swaying creakily in the hollow of a deep rut, the mysterious personage behind might have been seen extending his hand over the rapidly revolving wheel, feeling about the axle with his fingers, apparently in search of something; having discovered the object he sought on the one side, he renewed his operations on the other, which proving equally satisfactory, he once more doubled himself up, and taking off his head, began pulling it to pieces, dropping these in the road, after reducing them to the tiniest shreds imaginable. He next relieved himself of his right wing, then of his left, disposing of them as he had disposed of his head; and lastly, after many a violent and fruitless effort, succeeded in dislocating his tail, which came off in his hand: of this appendage, however, he was compelled to retain possession, for all his endeavours to destroy it proved ineffectual; wherefore he secured the same by twisting it and tying it about his waist.

This dismemberment of himself was not determined upon without due cause, nor without mature deliberation; probably not without a passing regret. Foreseeing the contingencies likely to arise, and prudentially resolving to guard against any mischance—for the slightest would inevitably ruin the bold project he had conceived—he adopted the precaution of disencumbering his limbs of whatever would impede their free action, for reasons that will soon appear ob-

vious, the moment being come when he should require full and unrestrained exercise of them.

The party had arrived within a short distance of the hamlet of St. Cloud—at this period the principal residence of the Duchess of Chartres—where there was a *corps-de-garde*, forming the head-quarters of the military and the night-patrol, whose notice it was to the interest of Democritus to elude. Sliding down from his perch, he allowed the vehicle to go a few yards ahead of him, and taking a slight run, of the width of the road, bounded over the hedge, and dashed onwards, under cover of it, until he got beyond the village, and considerably in advance of the coach, which, as he had anticipated, stopped at the *corps-de-garde*. It staid here only for a few minutes, D'Argenson wanting merely to inquire whether any circumstances had occurred needing his interference: the reply being in the negative, the postilions spurred and whipped the smoking horses, and the coach again whirled off at a rattling pace towards Paris. As soon as it had passed him, the philosopher cleared the hedge once more, alighting this time in the road, and having overtaken the vehicle, reinstated himself in his former position, remaining crouched in as small a compass as possible, in order to avoid the observation of such persons as they occasionally came up with.

It may elucidate to mention, that although Democritus had conveyed to Jacques some slight intimation of his intention to attempt a rescue, the latter remained totally ignorant of the manner in which his friend purposed to effect it, *he* himself being not only undecided on this point, because of the peculiar difficulties in the way of the accomplishment of his project, but moreover compelled to regulate his proceedings by circumstances as they might arise: thus, he had confined his intelligence to the simply informing Jacques that the word "JULIAN" was to be the signal for his rescue, leaving it to this individual's own courage to second the efforts of his friends.

Not a word passed between the parties in the coach, though a low, hollow chuckle from time to time escaped the lips of D'Argenson, who held one of his pistols tightly grasped and ready cocked, in the event of there being a necessity for using it, taking care, whenever an opportunity occurred, not to allow this precaution to escape the eye of Jacques. The latter sat closely wedged in between the soldiers, unable to stir an inch, but his ears alive to the slightest sound, and prepared to act as soon as he heard the signal, though, had his countenance been visible, it would not have betrayed the smallest emotion, so completely were his feelings and anxieties under his control.

D'Argenson's thoughts were only of one nature; evil. He gloated over the prospect before him of at length satiating his malice, and for ever getting rid of the man who, in the most unaccountable and mysterious manner, was always in his path, counteracting his malign influence; with him, the Baron would lose his last, his only friend.

Jacques' reflections were various and conflicting, and not untinged with bitterness. Upon him depended the fate of the Baron and his daughter Julie, whose release he had not, up to that time, found

either the opportunity of procuring, or indeed of completing his own arrangements for the accomplishment of this desired end: upon him, too, reposed the entire weight of an important political plot, pregnant with events of unprecedented interest, upon whose issue depended the fate of empires: upon him, in a word, rested the safety of a vast association, compounded of the most dangerous elements, inasmuch as it comprised men of opinions inimical to the reigning government and order of things, who, in the absence of their prudent leader—alone able to control their turbulence and render the formidable resources at their command subservient to the noble, patriotic purpose he contemplated achieving through their instrumentality—might, by a sudden outbreak, for no definite object, compromise the great cause for which he had united them by the mystical ties of free-masonry, though still, wary of accident, keeping locked within his own breast, the secret of his ulterior views.

Meanwhile the coach continued to roll rapidly on, now jerked heavily forward or swinging from side to side, and jolting its occupants most unmercifully: suddenly it seemed to sink upon itself, as if the axle had yielded beneath its weight, though it still dashed onwards with increasing speed; another moment and the ponderous machine gave a heavy lurch or *send*, and came with a crash side-first to the ground, along which the over-driven horses continued to drag it until the postilions were able, by dint of pulling and tugging at the bridle, to stop them.

By this accident the travellers were thrown pell-mell upon one another, the concussion causing the pistol D'Argenson held, to discharge itself through the bottom of the vehicle, the ball traversing the calf of his nearest companion's leg, upon whom he fell, pitching head first partly through the window, grinding his face upon the rough road and lacerating it cruelly. Jacques, more closely wedged in, fell upon him, topmost but one, and sustained no injury.

Half-stunned and bruised as he was, the Lieutenant of Police still retained his presence of mind, and by a desperate struggle contrived partly to extricate himself from his perilous position, vociferating with a tremendous oath; "Look to the prisoner! the prisoner!" but for the moment forgetting that his companions were just then more particularly occupied in looking to themselves.

By this time the postilions had dismounted and come to the assistance of the travellers, who were one by one released and set once more upon their feet, D'Argenson perceiving with secret gratification that his prisoner was secure, and closely surrounded by four of the soldiers.

"*Sang dieu!*" muttered he, grinding his teeth with concentrated rage at this mischance; "what's the meaning of this?"

"Both wheels have come off, Monseigneur!" responded one of the postilions, pointing to the coach.

"The axle-pins are gone!" exclaimed the other, examining by the touch the damaged part.

"*Tonnerre dieu!*" cried D'Argenson; "what's to be done? Guards; keep close to the prisoner! Where are we? How far from Paris?"

"Rather less than a league," answered the first postilion; "but we can't get there without wheels to the coach!"

"*Ventre bleu!*" growled D'Argenson; "'tis fortunate we are no farther! Who's hurt? Anybody?"

"There's a bullet through my leg," groaned the wounded man; "luckily there's no bone broken!"

"Thou must get to Paris somehow," replied D'Argenson; "we will bind thy leg to stay the bleeding, and then thou must march with us! I'll make thee a corporal for it!

"There's a horse," suggested one of the others.

"Go to the devil with thy horse," muttered the irritated Lieutenant; "I can't spare the man! Besides; he'll suffer more on horseback than on foot! I've known men walk with a broken shin! come! there's no time to be lost!"

The moon gave sufficient light to enable D'Argenson, assisted by the postilions, to bind up the injured limb, and the soldier, after walking a few paces, declared his ability to continue the journey afoot, preferring to endure the pain of his wound to losing the chance of promotion. During this time Jacques stood perfectly passive, looking on the scene with the greatest apparent indifference, but really suffering intense torture, for he doubted not but this was the work of the philosopher, whose signal he every moment expected to hear: his suspense was horrible, but though more than once he thought of taking advantage of this opportunity to escape from his capturers, whom he knew he could distance, he resolved to wait patiently for succour, in order the more effectually to lull D'Argenson's suspicions—if he entertained any—inwardly resolving, if the expected assistance did not arrive, to make a bold attempt for his liberty when they reached Paris, the intricacy of whose streets would better cover his retreat.

Seeing his prisoner so calm, D'Argenson was completely deceived, but did not for that, neglect taking due precaution to prevent his eluding him on the road. Placing two soldiers in front, Jacques next, side by side with a second, and the wounded man and his comrade after them, himself bringing up the rear, he gave the word march, adding:

"If the prisoner moves, right or left, shoot him!"

And in this order they advanced towards Paris.

Jacques' surmise was correct as to the cause of the accident. Having determined upon his plan of operations, the philosopher had only waited to execute the first part of it, until he was at a convenient distance from Paris to enable him to carry out the remainder. He first assured himself of the practicability of removing the axle-pins, which he successfully effected, almost simultaneously, by simply pressing the tiny spring that kept them in their place; this done, he once more exercised his saltatory talents, and placed the friendly hedge between himself and the travellers; nor had far to run before he ascertained the success of his stratagem, the main object whereof was to gain time. Not a word of the colloquy was lost upon him, and as soon as the party was fairly on the march, he set off with the speed of

the deer in the same direction as they, clearing every obstacle that came in his way, until again considerably in advance of them, when he vaulted back into the hard road, only to redouble his speed, never slackening it until he reached Maitre Chopin's, whose establishment he found brilliantly illuminated, for the Carnival was being kept up in style by the incongruous and diversified tenantry of the Quartier Latin, which was in a complete uproar from one extremity to the other: what he did it is not necessary to relate: the sequel will tell the tale far more effectually.

It struck a quarter past three when D'Argenson and his party reached the Porte St. Honoré; three quarters of an hour more would bring them to the Bastile! They continued their march through the now silent, deserted streets, uninterrupted by the passage of living creature, save now and then a picket of the patrol, or a peripatetic c that, after staring at them a moment with its green, glistening eye would scamper off scared, to the nearest doorway, and crouch the til they had passed.

D'Argenson, who had hitherto kept in the rear, now changed h position, with a view to watch the prisoner more closely, and w sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, sometimes in a vance, but restless always, and ready to pounce single-handed upo Jacques, should he attempt to elude his vigilance. The latter ind vidual, however, made no demonstration whatever calculated to justi this extreme caution, but walked deliberately on, as though quite u concerned as to what was to become of him, though, if the tru must be told, growing every moment more anxious, and almost b ginning to entertain some doubts as to the degree of success that h attended the philosopher's efforts.

The *Rues St. Honoré, de la Ferronnerie, des Lombards, de la Verr* were already left behind, and the expected signal had not been giv They came to the *Place du Marché St. Jean;* still every thing death; not a footstep—not a sound! At last they reached the *St. Antoine;* the dark towers of the Bastile, just visible by the doub ful light of the moon, already fowned upon him! Where could friends be?

At this moment D'Argenson came up close to him, and pointing to the Bastile with his naked sword, chuckled in his face, and got in advance of the soldiers, who pressed upon him more closely than before! A few minutes more must decide his fate!

Still they went on! They reached the *Rue St. Paul!* Jacques hesitated a moment! his quick ear had caught a sound! It was the signal! he distinctly heard the word "JULIAN" repeated thrice, though he could see no one!

Quick as thought, he turned upon the soldier at his side, and grasping him by the throat and sword-arm with one hand, seized him by the leg with the other, and with tremendous force literally hurled him half a dozen yards a-head! At the same instant, he heard the dead *thud* of heavy blows, and distinguished Vulcan and Hercules laying about them right and left with super-human energy, the former brandishing his ponderous hammer over one of the prostrate soldiers, the

Vulcan and Hercules saving [illegible] proof [illegible]
to the Emperor Julian.

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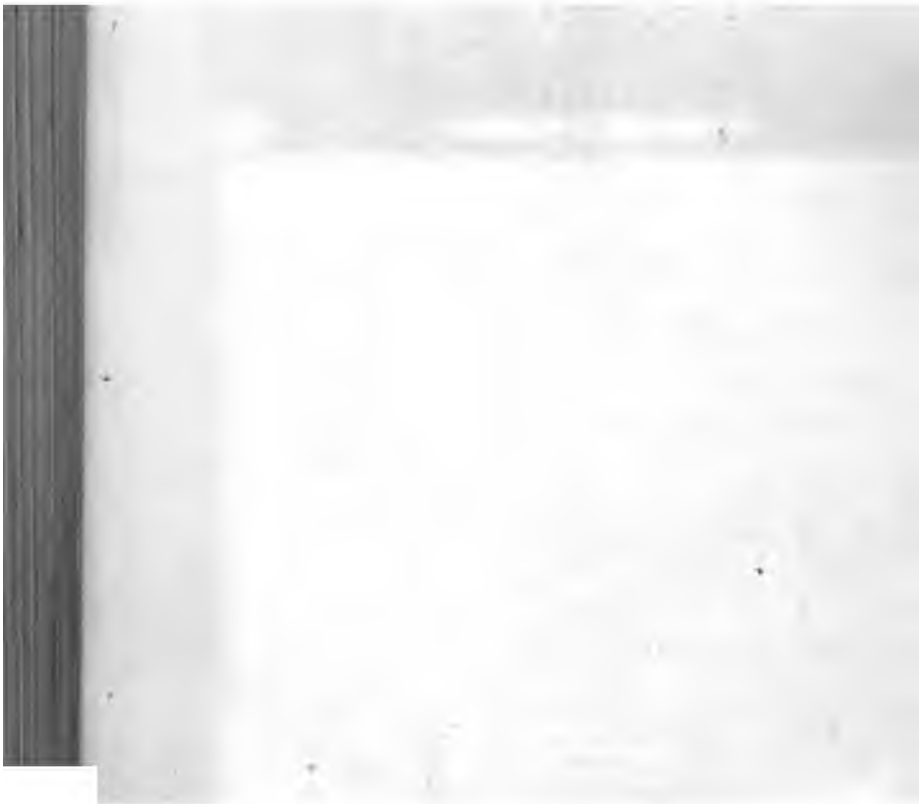

latter, after demolishing beneath his formidable club, two of his opponents—including the maimed man—in the act of attacking the third.

The whole affair occurred so suddenly and so rapidly, that D'Argenson, who, as already stated, had in his anxiety got considerably in advance of the escort—never dreaming of a rescue—saw nothing but the confused struggle; the truth at once came home to him. He rushed towards the combatants, levelling his pistol as he advanced and discharging it upon the person of Jacques; ineffectually however; for before he could come up to the spot, the spy and his rescuers had disappeared. He heard their retreating footsteps, and bounded in pursuit of them, shouting for the patrol, whilst a dozen heads belonging to as many owners, made their appearance at the various windows, frightened out of their sleep, and anxious to learn the cause of the uproar: but D'Argenson could not overtake the fugitives, whom after following some distance, he had the mortification to see retreating across the *Pont de la Tournelle* with the fleetness of greyhounds, and plunge into the intricate windings of the *Ile St. Louis*, where he lost sight of them.

He sat down on a stone-post near, and wept from excess of rage and disappointment, muttering curses upon himself, and the most horrible threats of vengeance against the men who had rescued Jacques.

He had recognised them.

CHAPTER XLIII.

NECESSARILY A VERY SHORT ONE, BECAUSE VERY UNINTERESTING; AND WHICH MAY BE SKIPPED BY SUCH READERS WHO DO NOT WISH TO KNOW HOW ST. MARCEL BECAME THE DEPOSITARY OF A CERTAIN STATE SECRET; AND IN CONSEQUENCE, SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED FROM PARIS.

It is now necessary for the reader to retrace events to the night on which St. Leu not only escaped from the Bastile, but thanks to the ingenuity of Maitre Bourliquet the smith, was likewise enabled to elude the vigilance of Corbé and the peril of again falling into the power of his relentless jailers.

Surrounded by the Lieutenant-Governor's escort, he passed the Porte St. Antoine without the slightest demur on the part of the soldiers in charge of it, and once safe within the city walls, forgot the dangers he had undergone. Wishing his conductors a good night, he proceeded along the by-streets in the direction of the Commandant's, now and then concealing himself in a church porch, or a friendly door-way, in order to escape the questionings of the patrol, whose attention might have been attracted to him from the singularity of his appearance in the streets at that late hour. As he drew near the asylum he sought, his strength, hitherto kept up mainly by excitement, began to fail him, and he was several times obliged to

stop short to gather sufficient courage to go on. At length, exhausted and ready to drop from excess of exertion, he reached the *Rue Traversière*, and after knocking a long time in vain, dreading every instant lest he should be interrupted by the watch, the door was opened by the porter, whom he instantly addressed by a certain familiar name which he was in the habit of applying to him, and which at once sufficed to convince this astonished individual of the speaker's identity. Scarcely had St. Leu succeeded in making himself known than he fainted.

The Commandant's establishment was by this unexpected event, soon in a state of unprecedented confusion. Dame Dorothé was called up out of her warm bed, from beneath a small mountain of eider-down, but upon hearing the news, and understanding them, which she did at last—as also that the immediate exercise of her medical talents was required—actually attempted to make haste, and dressed herself in exactly two minutes less time than she had ever done before. As for the Commandant, accustomed as he was to hear the trumpet sound a charge when in the midst of the dog's sleep so common to sailors and soldiers, he was up and bustling about in a trice, though in his haste to assure himself that St. Leu had really returned, and that it was not his ghost, but his *bonâ-fide* flesh and blood self, he was guilty of an irregularity in his costume quite incompatible—on the score of its lightness—with the advanced season of the year, but of which, in his great joy upon discovering the truth of his young friend's resuscitation, he remained totally ignorant until a delicate hint from Dame Dorothé caused him to consider the propriety of returning to his bed-chamber and investing himself with the garment he had forgotten.

To be brief, Dame Dorothé's restoratives soon produced the desired effect, but the poor young man's strength had been over-taxed, and he fell into a state of delirious fever that lasted six hours, ending in a short sleep from which he awoke somewhat refreshed, and conscious. Though extremely ill he related some few particulars of what had occurred to him, to Dame Dorothé and the noble-hearted Schwillwein, who both perceived the necessity of keeping his return a profound secret, to observe which religiously, every soul in the establishment who had come to the knowledge of it was forthwith sworn.

But there existed one person whom he knew to be so deeply interested in St. Leu's fate, that to conceal any portion of, much less the whole transaction from *him* would in the Commandant's eye and a half, have amounted to a crime little short of desertion; this person was St. Marcel, who was accordingly informed of all that had happened, and bound over to keep his peace upon the subject.

Both St. Marcel and Schwillwein, rejoiced beyond measure at having their comrade once more safe under their own lock and key, were now extremely desirous to learn from his proper lips the details of his adventurous escape, and the more minute particulars of his arrest and confinement, but Dame Dorothé pronounced a formal veto against any subject being mentioned that would excite her patient's mind

and as in these cases Dame Dorothé's word was law, they were of necessity compelled to restrain their curiosity until the restriction could be with prudence rescinded.

For upwards of a fortnight St. Leu remained in a most precarious condition, continually relapsing into fits of delirious fever, varying in their duration from one hour to twelve, that left him in a state of absolute exhaustion. Day and night the kind-hearted Dame tended him, watching over his couch with as much solicitude as though he had been her son, and peremptorily refusing any extraneous assistance. Her cares were at length rewarded by the improvement manifested in her patient's malady, and on the fifteenth day she pronounced him completely out of danger. In the exuberance of his joy at this gratifying intelligence, the worthy Schwillwein caught the venerable Dame in his arms, and in spite of her prudish struggles, roundly swore he *would* * * * * kiss her: aye, and he did it too; knocking off her spectacles in the act.

On the evening of the day immediately following that whereon occurred the important events recounted in the last chapter, St. Marcel, relieved awhile from his extra military duties, repaired in all haste from Versailles to the Commandant's, full of his recent colloquy with the Duke of Chartres. Impatient to communicate the important intelligence, and overjoyed at the certainty of his comrade's speedy reinstatement in his patron's favour, he hardly waited for the porter to open the door, but rushed in, and mounting the stairs four at a time, made his way, unannounced, into the chamber where St. Leu lay, still confined to his couch, and in a breathless voice exclaimed, grasping him by the hand:

"Good news! glorious news! saved my boy! saved!"

In his precipitation to approach St. Leu, he overlooked the Commandant—who had taken up his quarters in the sick man's apartment—nor became aware of the fact of his presence until his attention was aroused thereto by the violent fit of coughing that had overtaken the noble Schwillwein whilst in the act of emptying an overgrown goblet of bishop into his throat, and which was induced by the surprise consequent upon the new comer's sudden entry; causing half the contents of the goblet aforesaid to travel the wrong way down his gullet, the remaining half being ejected into his face, neck, and waistcoat.

"Thunder and lightning!" roared the Commandant, half strangled and sputtering, whilst the large tears rolled down his cheeks, "what's all this? eh! What! Why! St. Marcel?"

"A thousand pardons, my dear Commandant," answered the latter; "I really didn't see you! I was in such a hurry to tell St. Leu the news! I see he is better!"

"Much!" answered the sick man; "almost well; but intolerably weak! What is this news? Something concerning me!"

"Thou shalt hear!" resumed St. Marcel, addressing his comrade; "his Highness knows of thy escape, and is more thy friend than ever!"

This announcement was heathen Greek to Schwillwein, entirely

ignorant of the part the Duke had played in St. Leu's incarceration, and caused him to wink the eye and a half with unusual meaning, and to dash his empty goblet down upon the table with a force that made it ring again, at the same time ejaculating with peculiar energy, the words "*thunder and lightning!*"—his favourite oath when intensely excited or more than ordinarily pleased. Nor was St. Leu less astounded, though his emotion did not betray itself in so violent a manner. Half raising himself on his couch, and resting on one elbow, he gazed at St. Marcel with that intensity which ever accompanies the sudden announcement of a great and unexpected event, and remained a moment silent, for this intelligence was not less inexplicable to him than to the Commandant, inasmuch as he was equally unable to comprehend the cause of this unlooked for change in the Duke's sentiments towards him, as to understand how St. Marcel had arrived at the knowledge of the fact: all his thoughts, however, resumed themselves into the one great motive of his imprisonment: the Duke's unholy passion for Julie; and of her he spoke, as soon as he found utterance:

"And Julie—Julie!" exclaimed he; "what of her?"

St. Marcel shook his head; saying:

"I know nothing more than thyself, St. Leu! But be calm; I don't think matters are after all so bad as we imagined! Let me tell my tale, and thou shalt judge for thyself!"

Here the Commandant gave a loud *hem*, intended to attract attention to himself, it forming the customary preface to his own speeches, or to the explanatory remarks with which he occasionally favoured the discourses of others: the hint was, of course, understood.

"I've a notion," said he, "that corporals don't march at the head of a regiment, and that he who has a horse to clean and begins by currying his tail, commences his job at the wrong end! Hum! Now in this instance, friend St. Marcel, thou art the horse's tail, and St. Leu the head! Dost thou comprehend? eh?"

"Perfectly, Commandant," answered St. Marcel with a laugh; "I am quite willing to hear St. Leu relate the entire particulars of his mis-adventures, if he finds himself equal to the task! Perhaps it will be better thus, as what I have to say may elucidate the whole affair!"

"And I am ready to tell you everything," responded the sick man; "I have not very much more to add than you know already, and gathered from me during my fits of abstraction!"

"Take this, boy," cried the Commandant, pouring out and handing to him a glass of the beverage in which he was indulging to a considerable extent; "it will keep up thy courage! St. Marcel! Make thyself at home!"

The room in which the trio sat, was not very spacious, but of that size called snug and cosey; it was, in fact, Dame Dorothé's sitting-room,—which she had abandoned to St. Leu—and she had, as is already known, a peculiar optic to comforts. There was a cheerful wood fire blazing in the hearth, upon which the Commandant had just thrown an additional log, and near the fire was drawn the table, upholding certain bottles, a huge flagon recently replenished, and

sundry glasses and goblets. Close to the table was an arm-chair—such an arm-chair—so soft and sleepy—in which sat the Commandant, quite at home, half-dressed, his feet encased in slippers and resting upon a stool! St. Marcel remained seated close to St. Leu—who reposed upon a couch—the two former having their back turned to the door.

St. Leu commenced his narrative from the day of his capture up to the evening of his return to Schwillwein's, during the recital of which the worthy Commandant had frequent recourse to the flagon of bishop, and occasionally discharged himself of an oath or two, or an exclamation of satisfaction, according as the circumstance warranted the one or the other, the tears standing in his eye and a half when the young man spoke of the perilous position of the Baron's daughter, and his lusty fist clutching the arm of the chair with nervous energy when he mentioned the name of the Governor or of his nephew.

"This is the whole of *my* tale," observed the narrator, coming to an end! "Now, St. Marcel, thy turn! I am all impatience!"

"And don't spare the bishop!" ejaculated Schwillwein.

Our hero promised he would not, and in turn recounted such particulars of his own adventures as bore upon the fate of St. Leu, carefully abstaining from the slightest mention of his association with the Lutetians, but candidly avowing the scruples that the knowledge of his friend's imbastilement had all along caused him, accusing himself of cowardice and want of honour, for not having sought the Duke and confessed all to him, from the first.

"Wilt thou forgive me, St. Leu?" exclaimed he, as he touched upon this delicate point of his narrative; "my heart was good to do my duty, but I was bound by oath not to divulge the circumstances that came to my knowledge! Thou hast suffered much through me!"

"Give me thy hand St. Marcel," responded St. Leu, extending his own, and pressing that of his comrade; "I have nothing to forgive thee! Indeed, much to thank thee for! Nay! don't shake thy head, and smile so incredulously! I repeat that I owe thee much! Had'st thou on obtaining information of my incarceration in that hideous den, gone to his Highness and acknowledged the theft of the ring, he might indeed have pardoned thee *then*, as well as now, but the motive for detaining me a prisoner would have still existed; for, that he sought the ruin of Julie is beyond a doubt! Heaven protect her! To return, however, to the point! I was going to observe, St. Marcel, that supposing again, the Duke de Chartres had released me upon thy representations, I might have lost the opportunity of chastising those wretches Corbé and Riquelet, and what would have become of that poor child! I shudder to think of it!"

The Commandant was here seized with a slight shivering fit, and uttering a strange guttural noise, emptied his seventh bumper of bishop.

"Thus, friend St. Marcel," resumed St. Leu, "thou see'st I have something to thank thee for! But now of the Duke!"

"Ah!" echoed the Commandant, looking round and sliding himself a little lower down in his arm-chair.

St. Marcel repeated his conversation with D'Orleans, confining himself, as heretofore, strictly to those points touching St. Leu, who became visibly affected, for he was attached to the Prince, though he could not pardon his perfidy to Julie.

"And so thou art to see him to-morrow?" said he, as St. Marcel concluded: "dost thou think he is to be trusted?"

St. Marcel was about to reply, and the Commandant to imbibe an additional cup of bishop, when the door behind them opened, and two capuchins entered, one of whom remained in the rear, with his cowl drawn close over his face, whilst the other advanced towards the surprised group, disclosing his features.

"Jacques!" exclaimed St. Marcel, starting half up from his chair.

"Thunder and lightning!" echoed the Commandant, opening his eye and a half to their utmost extent.

St. Leu said nothing, but looked at the spy with feelings of deep interest.

"Don't disturb thyself Commandant," observed Jacques; "my business is with St. Marcel."

"Escaped!" ejaculated the latter, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"Yes!" responded he; "and bravely done! But I have no time to lose! Friend St. Marcel; thou must quit Paris this night! See! These papers—" here he produced a sealed packet of letters which he placed in the young man's hands—"must be delivered as speedily as possible! 'Tis an affair of life and death!"

"The Count de Harrach; Madrid!" exclaimed St. Marcel, reading the superscription. "But my duties! I cannot leave *them*! I shall be a deserter!"

"I will arrange *that*," resumed the spy. "Bid farewell to the Commandant and thy comrade, whom leave to *my* care, for thou must hence at once!" here he whispered to him; St. Marcel started, and concealed the packet; Jacques continued; "the coach is below waiting! Father Simon and myself will see thee safe a league or two on the road. Come! Commandant! I shall see thee again! I have a word or two for thy private ear!"

The silent communication that Jacques conveyed to St. Marcel was of such a nature that he no longer hesitated. Grasping St. Leu's hand with fervor, and articulating a scarcely audible adieu, he held out his palm to Schwillwein, who pressed it in return, unable to utter a syllable, so completely did his astonishment paralyze him.

"Sieur St. Leu," said Jacques as the party left the apartment, "rely on the word of Jacques! Thou art safe! Good night! Commandant! *au revoir*!"

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed Schwillwein, sinking back into his chair as they disappeared.

Within an hour from that time, St. Marcel, having received certain instructions from Jacques and Father Simon, was dashing along the great southern road, on his way to Madrid.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE DUKE OF CHARTRES PAYS A NOCTURNAL VISIT TO LUTETIA.

THE arrest of Jacques was an event that not only deeply concerned but much perplexed the Duke of Chartres. It concerned him, on account of the great personal interest he took in this incomprehensible individual, an interest arising from the peculiar nature of the connexion so unexpectedly established between them by an extraordinary complication of circumstances; and perplexed him, inasmuch as it left him undecided how to act with regard to the appointment he had made for the following night; moreover, being ignorant entirely of the fate of the spy, whose escape from the personal custody of D'Argenson appeared to him next to impossible, unconscious as he was of the resources his unknown friend had at his command to accomplish the same, he beheld his hopes of again seeing Beatrice suddenly frustrated at a single blow; for these rested solely upon Jacques, who alone possessed the secret of his intimacy with this unfortunate girl, and whose potent agency he felt desirous of securing in order to neutralize the terrible and irksome influence D'Argenson already sought to exercise over him.

Although no longer in a frame of mind to take part in the gaieties of the masque, which continued to increase as the hours waned, the Duke was in a measure compelled to return to the Grand Gallery in order not to commit a breach of etiquette towards the King by retiring without first making his obeisance. On his way, he learnt that both his Majesty and Madame de Maintenon had already withdrawn from the hilarious scene, in consequence of the sudden indisposition of the latter. Half rejoiced at this occurrence, which rendered his return to the Gallery unnecessary, he was hastening to his chamber, when a small black page, who appeared on the watch, intercepted him on the way, and placed a slip of paper in his hand. D'Orleans opened the missive, and having perused it—not without some degree of surprise—signed to the messenger to go on. The latter bowed, and led the way to the private apartment of Madame de Maintenon.

She was alone, reclining in an easy-chair, into which she had apparently thrown herself, dressed just as she was on quitting the masque. Her countenance betrayed deep anxiety, but lighted up when the King's nephew entered, to whom she made a graceful movement of the hand, bidding him be seated: the page withdrew.

"You are surprised," said she, smiling, as she addressed the Prince, "at my sending for you?"

D'Orleans answered, "*rather.*"

"I thought you would be," she continued; "but having learnt

that you had accompanied this man Jacques, and D'Argenson to the *Salle des Gardes*, I felt anxious to ascertain what had passed!"

Delighted at the opportunity so unexpectedly afforded him of engaging interest for Jacques in so potent a quarter, where his fate seemed already to have excited commiseration, D'Orleans recounted the particulars of the scene in the *Salle des Gardes*, dwelling with considerable force upon the acrimony manifested by D'Argenson against the prisoner, and expressing his own firm conviction of the spy's innocence of the charges alleged against him; an opinion in which Madame de Maintenon acquiesced.

"And yet," observed she, thoughtfully, "what *can* D'Argenson mean by these proofs of Jacques' guilt? I know his malice is capable of inventing any thing, and his wicked ingenuity of torturing the simplest facts until they assume the colour of crimes! But these proofs! There is something beneath all this that must be fathomed!—You say he accompanied Jacques to the Bastile?"

D'Orleans inclined his head in reply, not thinking necessary to throw out any hint of the probability of a rescue being attempted, adding, in allusion to D'Argenson:

"In fact, Madame, he shewed himself in his true colours; a demon incarnate; and to counteract his evil designs, I purposed applying to his Majesty to solicit his interference on behalf of Jacques."

"You appear to take a very lively interest in this man!" said Madame de Maintenon in a half inquiring tone.

"I do, Madame! a deep interest!" responded the Duke, emphatically.

"May I know the reason of it?" asked she, fixing her penetrating gaze upon his countenance.

"Oh yes! why not?" answered he; "Jacques once saved me from an imminent danger, and I seek to return the service in kind!"

"Hum!" ejaculated the lady, doubtingly; "nothing else?"

"Nothing else?" observed D'Orleans, reiterating her inquiry with marked emphasis and astonishment.

"I thought," rejoined she, "that he might have a stronger claim upon your gratitude for the manner in which he seconded your honest designs upon the daughters of the Baron de St. Auney!"

"Madame!" ejaculated the Prince, changing colour, "this irony is—is—ill-timed—"

"Perhaps unmerited," responded Madame.

"No! not unmerited," answered the Prince; "though if you knew all, you would perhaps be less severe towards me! Dubois and D'Argenson are more to blame than I!"

"'Tis at any rate very generous on your part," continued De Maintenon, "to cast all the discredit of that affair upon your companions; and certainly high time to regret having caused the incarceration of an innocent girl, now that there are no means of procuring her release, and whose only crimes were her beauty and her relationship to a nobleman whom D'Argenson hates with all the bitterness of his bitter nature! It was an expedient every way worthy the ac-

complished—the seductive—the gallant Duke of Chartres! Fie! Highness! Shame upon you for condescending to abet the villainy of such a man! Were you then so blinded by your dishonest passion, that you did not suspect a deeper motive than the serving you, lurked beneath his readiness to aid your design? Did not the very violence of the means alarm your suspicions! *you*—so shrewd—so penetrating! Applaud your work, Highness! Picture to yourself that young flower, pining and drooping within the unwholesome, tainted atmosphere of the Bastile, to which she has been confined upwards of ten weeks! And her lover! Ah! You start to see me so well informed! Well, then; answer me this! How have you acted towards him? The Bastile—the Bastile—always the Bastile! And Jeanne de St. Auney! Finding that you could not possess the one sister, you would have contented yourself with the other! What reparation can you hope to make to that unfortunate family should they ever regain their liberty? I blush for you, Highness! I knew you dissipated—I did not believe you vile!"

D'Orleans—overcome by excess of shame, and actually unable to look at Madame de Maintenon in the face, avoided her gaze by hiding his burning face in his hand, his head sinking every moment lower upon his breast; her last observation roused him, and starting in his seat he once more addressed her, in a voice almost inaudible:

"Hear me, Madame," said he; "let me explain—"

Madame de Maintenon shook her head and replied:

"You can explain nothing! I am acquainted with all the particulars of this transaction—"

"All!" exclaimed D'Orleans, interrupting her.

"All; without exception," responded she, with strong emphasis upon these last words; "some facts—that is to say the principal ones—were communicated to me, and the remainder I guessed; you see, then, you cannot enlighten me!"

"Nay, Madame," observed the Prince, deprecatingly; "if you know all, I must be partially justified in your eyes—"

"On the contrary," replied Madame de Maintenon, severely, her fine countenance illumined by indignation; "I appreciate *motives!* Your's were bad! The end you sought was base; the means you employed to gain that end, were villainous! I regard your conduct as infamous to the last degree! Doubtless Monseigneur D'Argenson has played a double game with you, but nothing can extenuate your acquiescence in a plot, the first step in the accomplishment of which was the plunging a defenceless, friendless girl into the polluted dungeons of the Bastile; the very name of which makes the boldest criminals shudder!"

"I beseech you, Madame," exclaimed the Duke in an agony of emotion, "to cease these upbraidings! I confess that I deserve them, but am willing to atone for my errors! only point out the way, and you shall see with what alacrity I will obey your instructions!"

"'Tis too late, Highness! Julie de St. Auney would have been released long since, had my influence been great enough to overcome

his Majesty's reluctance to interfere in the affairs of his Lieutenant of Police, whose power increases every day, and who renders the State such services that his ministry cannot be dispensed with! One man alone could save her; that man is Jacques!"

"And he is in D'Argenson's power," ejaculated the Prince; "can nothing be done to rescue him from it?"

"I do not know, indeed," resumed De Maintenon; "it was to learn what had become of him that I sent for you. But I shall see his Majesty again to-night, and will endeavour to induce him to change his resolution, for besides my wish to preserve Julie's only friend from harm, I have in this instance, a personal motive for disappointing D'Argenson of his prey!"

"*I* cannot hope to succeed if you should fail!" observed D'Orleans; "but," continued he with a slight accent of irony, "I am glad to find Jacques possesses so powerful an advocate!"

"Jacques is the friend of the injured and the oppressed, Highness, and as such has strong claims upon my sympathy."

"Did he not, Madame, act as D'Argenson's agent in the abduction of the Baron's daughter?" asked D'Orleans; "how then is he the *friend* of innocence?"

"Because, Highness, it is sometimes necessary to encounter art by artifice, and though abhorring evil, *seem* to abet it in order to counteract its effects!"

"You speak enigmatically, Madame!" observed the Duke!"

"Perhaps, Highness! but I shall not explain my meaning; one portion of your punishment—if you have any compunction at all left—for the injury you have done an unoffending family, must be the knowledge of your incapability of assisting them out of their troubles; the rest you must settle with your conscience!"

"I pray you, Madame," exclaimed D'Orleans, with an accent of deep contrition, "not to prove inexorable! I have done wrong, and confess it; nay, am willing—as I have already told you—to atone for my errors! Do not deprive me of the slender satisfaction of doing so, if there be a means!"

"The sincerity of your repentance," observed Madame de Maintenon, "must be tested by your future conduct! You have done your vile work so effectually, that it is now out of your power to undo it; perhaps out of the power of those who *would!* However, your communication with respect to the scene between Jacques and D'Argenson has opened my eyes, and will prove of use to me! thus far, then, you have served Jacques, who may in turn become the means of assisting this unfortunate family. Let this satisfy you for the present!"

"One question, Madame," rejoined the Duke; "who was you informant? Jacques?"

"Your question is indiscreet, Highness," responded Madame; "I should be indeed unworthy the confidence reposed in me did I betray it! However, I may tell you this much; it was *not* Jacques!"

"Then I am completely at fault," responded the Duke, rising; "for I thought he alone, besides D'Argenson and Dubois, possesed

the secret, and I know you hold no converse with these two! Have you anything more to say to me, Madame?"

"Nothing Highness! Indeed, our conversation has been protracted to a greater length than I anticipated!"

Here she rang a silver hand-bell which was instantly responded to by the appearance of her black page; the Duke took her hand, placed it to his lips, bowed, and withdrew to his chamber, not to sleep, but to ruminate over the occurrences of the day: the result of his cogitations was a determination to repair to Maitre Chopin's, according to appointment.

After a night of feverish inquietude, he arose unrefreshed from the couch on which he had thrown himself without undressing, and summoning his attendant, ordered a horse to be saddled: before the clock struck ten he was at the Palais Royal. Here he passed the day, growing more uneasy and anxious as the night approached; at length, warned by the clock of the Palace, he assumed his disguise—a plain hunting-suit of green—and sallied forth from the pavilion already known, gaining the street by the small door in the wall; as the *bourdon* of Notre Dame boomed midnight, he stood on the threshhold of the Cep-de-Vigne.

The quarter he was now in, only the day before so animated, was silent as the grave, and not a light was to be seen at any of the windows, so completely had the revelries of Shrove-Tuesday expended the vitality of the denizens of the *Pays Latin*; even the *cabaret* itself was untenanted, save by the worthy vintner, who from force of habit more than any delusive expectancy of customers, had not yet shut up, though he had ensconced his own rotund body in a corner of his bar, and with arms folded on his breast, and legs extended to their utmost limit, was distributing a succession of affable nods to the small regiment of wooden-pitchers that "stood at ease" marshalled rank and file on the counter, occasionally addressing them, collectively, with a low, but expressive snort that savoured as strongly of excessive libations as of over-fatigue: no sooner, however, did the echo of strange foot-steps catch his ear, than he started suddenly to his feet, and after a blink or two, began disturbing the order of the pitchers and glasses to make a shew of having something to do, his good-natured features relaxing into a broad-business smile, to welcome his visiter.

The Duke, though enmuffled in an ample cloak, and wearing a large Spanish hat or *sombréro*, devoid of plume, slouched over his eye-brows, was instantly recognized by Chopin, who, notwithstanding, from habitual caution—did not allow the fact to be observed by the principal party.

"I'm a late customer," said the latter on entering; "I'll thank you for a draught of wine!"

"Half a *sétier* or a *chopine*?"* inquired mine host.

* The *sétier*, from the Latin *sextarius*, was the Roman pint, and until the introduction of the decimal measures of quantity, &c. a few years back, was in use all over France, indeed is to this day. The *chopine* (chopin) also still employed, contains nearly a pint English.

"Oh! which you please," responded the Prince, throwing a piece of gold on the counter; "a glass for me and another for yourself will suffice! and never mind the change!"

"You'll have the best, of course?" suggested Chopin, eyeing the glittering coin.

"Of course!" replied D'Orleans, bowing.

"I think I've got a drop will suit your palate," continued the vintner, with a knowing wink, and getting upon a stool in order to reach down from a shelf over-head, a peculiarly-shaped stone-bottle that had a couple of small handles sticking out—like arms a-kimbo—from its flat sides; "I drink it myself! 'Tis fifteen-year-old *Côte-d'Or*! I don't give it to *every body*, nor sell it either!"

Having once more touched *terra firma* he poured out a couple of glasses full of the precious liquor, and handing one to the Duke, held the other up to his nose, exclaiming, with a sonorous "ah!" preceded by a deep aspiration and a loud smack of the lips; "'tis quite a *bouquet!*"

"I'll give you a toast, friend," observed the Prince, elevating his glass a little; "here's to the health of—"

"I beg your pardon," exclaimed Chopin, hurriedly, and pointing to the door; "is there not somebody behind you? I'm sure I saw a face!"

D'Orleans set down his glass, and turned round to reconnoitre, but encountered no one; fancying, however, that he heard a sound as of light feet retreating, he stept to the door and looked out: the street was deserted.

"You must have been mistaken," said the Duke; "I can see no body at all!"

"Perhaps I *was* mistaken," replied the vintner; "and yet I could have sworn I caught sight of a shadow moving! However—your toast, Monsieur!"

"Well," rejoined D'Orleans, "here's to the health of *Julian!*"

"With all my heart," responded Chopin; "here's to the health of Julian!" and the wine rapidly disappeared down his throat.

"Step into the little parlor," continued mine host, mysteriously, at the same time opening the wicket, and making himself small to allow D'Orleans room to pass; "I will shut up shop, and then attend to you. I sha'n't be long! You can amuse yourself with this the while!" and setting down the old-fashioned bottle and the two glasses before his visiter, he proceeded to close the *cabaret*, as soon as he had done which, he returned into the little parlor.

"I see you know my business," said D'Orleans to him, as he entered; "you recognize me?"

"I do," responded Chopin, bowing respectfully to the Prince, as though he had only just discovered this fact; "all my guests got drunk last night on your Highness' munificence. I broached three casks—and of the best too!"

"So much the better," resumed the Duke; "we will pledge Julian again in this choice wine of thine, and then to the affair that brought me hither!"

"I shall be compelled to blind-fold your Highness," observed the vintner, setting down his glass after this last libation.

"Then I suppose I shall be under the necessity of submitting to it," responded the Prince; "very well, Maitre Chopin; only be quick! Here is wherewith! But tell me; is he safe?"

The worthy host of the Cep-de-Vigne nodded his head, and smiling very significantly, took the tendered handkerchief, and proceeded to bandage the Prince's eyes, which he did very effectually; D'Orleans, overjoyed at Jacques' escape, lending himself to the operation without manifesting the smallest symptom of impatience; when it was done, the former lighted the stump of a torch, and opened the door of the parlor, which, as may be remembered, led into the court-yard, and into the suite of dining-rooms on the ground floor.

"Take hold of this, Highness," said Chopin, thrusting a corner of his leathern apron into the Prince's hand, "and follow me!"

D'Orleans grasped the garment, as he was bidden, and followed the vintner, who first took him twice round the court, and making him pass through the dining-rooms on the ground floor, brought him back to the place they had started from.

"Now for the steps, Highness," exclaimed he, guiding the Prince down the steep flight of stone-stairs that led to the vaults beneath; "only thirty-three of them besides the landing in the middle."

"I hope we shall soon arrive at our journey's end," observed the Prince; "where on earth, or rather under the earth art thou taking me to?"

"All in good time, Highness! All in good time!" rejoined Chopin; "do n't hurry!"

They soon reached the wine-cellar, where the Duke was again made to describe a number of angles and zig-zags, which completely set at nought his ingenuity to obtain even a slight idea of the locality: when Maitre Chopin got to the spot where Vulcan and Hercules had been only a few hours previously so nearly immolating the Lieutenant of Police, he applied his thumb to a small spring that was concealed in a crevice of the masonry too low down to be easily detected, and immediately a square door flew open noiselessly, disclosing a dark passage, into which he entered, dragging his mystified companion after him, adopting the precaution of pulling the door *to*.

After traversing a series of passages, and passing through some half dozen doors, the pair reached the one that opened into the apartment of Jacques; Chopin at once ushered the Prince in, observing that he might now unloose the bandage from his eyes: as the latter did so, the vintner, making a very low bow, backed out of the door, leaving the Prince alone with Jacques.

The spy had not long since come in, for he was still enveloped in the capuchin-frock and cowl, and seated on a low stool in front of a wood fire which he was kindling, stooping over it, with one arm resting on his knees, the other hand being employed in raking together the live embers: when the Prince came in he turned his head, and perceiving who it was, waited until he broke silence.

On removing the handkerchief, D'Orleans was for a moment dazzled by the light of the lamp—though dim enough in all conscience—and shaded his eyes to accustom them to it, for they were strained by the pressure of the bandage; a slight start of surprise escaped him when he caught the first glimpse of the locality to which he had been brought, but his unpleasant surmises were immediately dispelled on seeing Jacques, who now rose to receive him, and drawing a stool to the fire, motioned to him, after the first recognitory salutations were interchanged, to take a seat.

"Well, friend Jacques," said D'Orleans, with unfeigned pleasure; "I sincerely congratulate thee on thy escape; though, to be candid, I dreaded the worst! How was it managed?"

"Simply enough!" answered the spy; "I had friends who did not abandon me! It was a mere matter of time!"

Here he related the particulars of the philosopher's exploit, and the issue of the attack upon the escort, much to the Prince's amusement, who again felicitated him upon his fortunate escape, adding in conclusion:

"So doubtful was I of the practicability of any assistance being afforded thee, that I hesitated to come hither! The inducement, however, was too powerful to be resisted!"

"You have done well, Highness," responded Jacques, "and shall not be disappointed of the object of your visit. You are surprised to find me inhabit such a place!" continued he, remarking that the Duke's eyes wandered restlessly about; "but such as you see it, it is the only home I have."

"And Beatrice!" observed D'Orleans, tremulously; "does she dwell here too?"

"She does!" answered the spy.

"Thou wilt bring me to her!" exclaimed the Prince, anxiously.

"She is asleep, and must not be disturbed!" replied Jacques. "Poor girl! 'tis not often she thus forgets her sorrows!"

The Duke's heart beat violently, and he hung down his head, abashed, but though he would have asked a hundred questions about her, his tongue refused to perform its customary office: a short pause ensued, when the spy resumed:

"I have a favour to ask your Highness, which I know you will not refuse."

"Not if it be in my power to grant it!" replied D'Orleans looking up.

"'Tis to give the Sieur St. Marcel leave of absence from his regiment for a twelvemonth," rejoined Jacques.

"What does this signify, Sieur Jacques?" exclaimed the astounded Prince. "I saw St. Marcel late last night, and appointed him to meet me at the Palais Royal at noon to-morrow!"

"You will not see him," observed the spy, with incisive brevity; "I have only now returned from escorting him a league or two on his way to Madrid, whither I have sent him!"

The Dukes introduction to Lutetia

"To Madrid! But for what purpose?" asked D'Orleans, more and more surprised.

"To serve him and myself too," responded Jacques. "Your Highness knows the proverb: "*two birds with one stone*:" I had important business to transact at Madrid which required the aid of a man whom I could confide in; that man was St. Marcel; so I despatched him. Again, he was, although ignorant of it, in imminent danger of being incarcerated in the Bastile; one motive the more for getting him out of the way!"

"In the Bastile!" ejaculated the Duke; "for what?"

"Ask Monseigneur D'Argenson;" returned the spy.

"Nay, then!" continued D'Orleans, with increasing earnestness; "from what quarter does this danger come? Who is his enemy?"

"D'Argenson!" answered the other.

"Mystery upon mystery," exclaimed the Prince; "pray throw some light upon these enigmas!"

"Is your Highness acquainted with the history of this young man?"

"I cannot say that I am, Sieur Jacques. My earliest acquaintance with him dates from the siege of Mons; he was then a sub-officer, having risen from the ranks—"

"Ah! I see!" said Jacques, interrupting the speaker; "your Highness is not aware of his being a foundling!"

"I confess," observed the Duke, "my ignorance of this circumstance, up to the present moment. How didst thou discover it? And of what importance is the knowledge of this fact?"

Jacques smiled and resumed:

"You must know, Highness, that a short time since, D'Argenson commissioned me to endeavour to trace the heir of a certain Count de St. Angin, who had long been missing, and was indeed believed to be dead, until, apparently, accident brought to light the fact of his being still alive, though he could no where be found. D'Argenson's motive for discovering the young man was to revenge himself upon him for an imaginary wrong he had sustained from the old Count, his more fortunate rival in an affair of the heart. The lady was the sister of the Baron de St. Auney!"

The Duke appeared thunder-struck. Without heeding his astonishment, Jacques continued his recital from the period of the Count de St. Angin's decease up to that time, enumerating the various machinations D'Argenson had set on foot to ruin the Baron and procure possession of the estates which he held in trust for the heir, in the event of the latter ever being discovered, and shewing how his hatred pursued not only the Baron but the members of his family, including the young Count, whose fate, should he fall into his power, was already sealed.

"Thou hast reason then," observed D'Orleans, as Jacques ended, "to suppose that the lost heir and St. Marcel are identical?"

"We can only surmise at present," responded Jacques; "for we have no positive proofs. In the absence of these, I have kept St. Marcel in ignorance of the few facts that have come to my know-

ledge, though I need but two or three links to complete a chain of evidence which up to this moment is insufficient to establish his claims with any chance of success. Unfortunately, the testimony requisite is of such a nature, that the vitality of the question rests solely upon it; in short, we lack the proofs of his identity, for the female to whom he was entrusted is dead, or, which is nearly the same, is not to be found! Accident placed me in possession of all I know concerning him, and has doubtless served D'Argenson, who, a few weeks ago, first subjected him to surveillance, merely on account of the great resemblance the young man bears to the Baron's late sister; to-day, however, he ordered one of his secret agents to arrest him, as soon as he returned to Paris, and convey him to the Bastile. Fortunately, the man is a friend of mine, and his announcement came just in time to save St. Marcel! To place him completely out of D'Argenson's power, your Highness' co-operation is needed! Here are writing materials!" and the spy placed these on the table before the Duke.

"I see it all," observed D'Orleans, writing; "D'Argenson has obtained some private clue to his identity, and no longer hesitates! Here! here is the furlough you asked me for, though I cannot perceive its use."

"You do not know D'Argenson, Highness," rejoined Jacques, smiling bitterly, at the same time folding up the paper and thrusting it into his breast. "Finding himself baulked of his prey—for it will be impossible to keep him in ignorance of St. Marcel's disappearance—his devilish ingenuity will devise some crafty pretext —another *fête* for instance would afford it to him—to obtain temporary command of the Corps of Musketeers; the absence of St. Marcel he would at once construe into the crime of desertion, and on this plea, issue an order for his apprehension!"

"I will gain a march upon him there," answered the Duke; "to-morrow, St. Marcel's furlough shall be duly enregistered; I shall thus not only serve St. Marcel, but revenge myself upon D'Argenson, whose plans I have sworn to frustrate by every means in my power; and I solemnly engage, Sieur Jacques, to assist thee to accomplish the same end! I am his enemy until death! He has made me the instrument of his detestable vengeance, and caused me to act a part of which I am ashamed—"

"And duped you into the bargain, Highness," chimed in Jacques; and though I too condescended to figure in that transaction, it was with a view to serve the girl, not to destroy her."

"Ah!" exclaimed D'Orleans; "the affair of the ring! Yes! I suspected him of designs upon that young maiden from the day Dubois assured me he saw D'Argenson, disguised as a Capuchin prowling about the neighbourhood of the Carmelites."

"Dubois was right too," replied Jacques, "for the Lieutenant of Police frequents that convent secretly; he is the bearer of his Majesty's letters to one of the sisters—"

"*Sister Louise de la Misèricorde! Madame de la Vallière!*" ejaculated D'Orleans, with a movement of surprise.*

"The same," responded the spy; "Dubois, however, was in error when he inferred that D'Argenson and the Capuchin whom he saw enter the Baron's residence, were one and the same person: it was St. Leu!"

"St. Leu! Then why disguised, Sieur Jacques? Was she not betrothed to him? What had he now to fear?"

"He assumed a disguise, Highness, to avoid notice! The house as you know, adjoins the Chartreuse, and a Capuchin friar might resort thither unsuspected, when a dashing young officer—and of the Musketeers too—could not!"

"But the signal;" retorted the Prince, smiling; "fancy a holy father seeking admittance to a convent by throwing a handful of gravel at the casement! Had he made a loud sign of the cross now—"

"You forget," observed Jacques, interrupting the Duke, "that the hour was advanced, and that our lover did not know he was so closely watched!"

"I see! I see!" resumed D'Orleans; "and the astonishment of D'Argenson when I taxed *him* with being the gallant, is now explained! Fool that I was! When I assented to her being conveyed to the Bastile, I ought to have suspected him of a sinister motive! The scene too that passed between him and the Baron should have opened my eyes! I must have been out of my mind! He never intended her for *me!* No! He had her taken thither to work out his designs of vengeance against her father, and kept her there in order to decoy him back, that he might gratify two passions at once! Oh! the hellish scheme! And I—*I* have been his base instrument! I never shall forgive myself nor him!"

"Nor is this all, Highness!" said Jacques, resolved upon enlightening the Duke a little more; "for D'Argenson, having by a deliberate lie blinded his Majesty as to his reasons for detaining both the girl and her father prisoners, and procured the king's warrant for their further detention during the royal pleasure, his next step was to induce you to renounce all thoughts of Julie; the bait he held out to accomplish this end was Jeanne, her sister! You remember the supper in the pavilion—"

"'Twas thou, then," exclaimed D'Orleans with a slight start of surprise, "that wast concealed behind the curtains!" Jacques smiled and inclined his head. "And 'twas thou, too, who didst convey the girl away from her home, in order to baffle us? D'Argenson never told me this!"

* The amours of the beautiful Duchess de la Vallière are too well known to need more than a cursory mention here.

"In 1675, perceiving that she no longer held empire over the affections of the fickle monarch, who had now transferred them to Madame de Montespan, she took the veil, at the Convent of the Carmelites at Paris, where she died in 1710. Notwithstanding her retirement, however, she still corresponded with the king, and with the two children she bore him; a son and a daughter; the former was the Duke de Vermandois; the latter married Prince Armand de Conti, the Great Condé's nephew."—*(Voltaire.)*

"Neither did he, when he promised to have Jeanne De St. Auney taken to the Convent in the Rue de Charonne, tell your Highness that she was already there!" observed Jacques; and he detailed D'Argenson's scheme to the Prince, and the mode in which the maiden was rescued from her perilous situation.

"Duped! duped! arch-duped!" ejaculated D'Orleans, stamping his foot with vexation as the spy terminated his recital; "he was determined to complete his infamous work! Yet, Sieur Jacques, can I *not* understand why he deceived me regarding the girl's abduction!"

"My knowledge of his character," replied Jacques, "often furnishes me with a clue to the motives which actuate him, or I might, in this instance, be embarrassed to satisfy your Highness! He is proverbial for cautiousness, and gave a proof of it on this occasion by securing his prey before he proposed disposing of it! Had you hesitated to fall into his scheme, he would, as a last resource, have told you the truth! He knew enough of your Highness' *penchants* to mistrust the success of his artifice! *Bears do not refuse honey that is thrust into their jowl!*"

Although the spy's simile was none of the most complimentary to the Duke—who could hardly refrain from smiling at its laconism—it put him at once in possession of the secret of D'Argenson's duplicity; and by exposing his cool villainies naked, in all their disgusting hideousness, rendered him painfully alive to the enormity of having lent himself to the perpetration of them, incensing him more and more against the Lieutenant of Police for inveigling him into such a plot. For a minute, or longer, he remained silent, but his brows were contracted, and his hands convulsively clenched; at length, his thoughts having turned from the author of these machinations, to the objects of them, he inquired in a tremulous voice, whither Jeanne de St. Auney had been conveyed. The spy replied:

"Her retreat must remain a secret, Highness, until there shall no longer be a necessity for it."

These words were uttered in such a grave tone, and accompained by a glance of such significancy, that D'Orleans perceived the uselessness of pushing his inquiry further, but continued:

"I feel that I have no right to be considered in the light of a friend of the *demoiselles* De St. Auney; yet, believe me, Sieur Jacques, I seek only an opportunity to prove the sincerity of my sentiments towards them! I certainly sought their ruin, regarding *them* only as I did many others—as fair game—but a new interest has sprung up in my heart in their favour, and sooner than injure either, I would lose this right hand! I am heartily ashamed of my conduct! There is St. Leu too! I have wronged *him* through the perfidious subtlety of D'Argenson! Did he not assure me, after our interview with Julie, that St. Leu must have witnessed my attempt upon the sisters, and sought my life—though not recognizing me disguised as I was—to revenge the affront? And did he not upon this plea, imbastile him by virtue of a *lettre-de-cachet?* I see his motives clearly now! St.

Leu was the girl's lover—her affianced husband—his vengeance would have been incomplete without the two victims! Thanks, however, to St. Marcel, and to thee, Sieur Jacques, I am now acquainted with his infernal manœuvres, and he shall know it!"

"And your indiscretion will compromise the safety of the very persons you most desire to serve," observed Jacques. "No, Highness! Your lips must be sealed! Let what you know serve you as a guide in your future relations with D'Argenson, but the name of your informant must not transpire, for it cannot tend to ensure you a single advantage! This you must promise, Highness! I know I can rely upon your word!"

"Thou art right, Jacques," answered D'Orleans, after a brief pause; "my indiscretion might, as thou say'st, injure instead of serving! I pledge my word to observe secrecy on this point! But a word about St. Leu! Hast thou any clue to his hiding place? If thou hast, tell me, that I may seek him and acknowledge the injustice I have done him!"

"I know your Highness is well inclined," replied the spy; "St. Marcel made me acquainted with your sentiments towards St. Leu; for the moment, however, you can do nothing for him! Let it suffice you to know that he is with friends! You are perhaps not aware, that it is a crime punishable by death, or by incarceration for life, for a prisoner to quit the Bastile without the King's signature to the letter of emancipation, or that of his proxy, the Lieutenant of Police?"*

* Rule 23rd. "The Governor and his subordinates shall be answerable for the prisoners committed to their care, and shall keep a correct register shewing the dates of their entry and of their liberation, or of their death; a true copy of which shall be transmitted every week to Monsieur de la Reynie, who may, at any time, inspect the official register for the purpose of comparing it with the copy sent to him. And if it shall appear that the entries are incorrect, or have been falsified, or that, either by the connivance of the Governor or that of any other functionary attached to the service of the fortress, any prisoner has quitted the *château*, without the King's consent written at the foot of the letter of emancipation, or that of the Lieutenant of Police, the Governor and the functionary so offending, shall be arraigned for the crime of treason, and punished accordingly, and the prisoner himself, if taken alive, shall suffer death as a felon, or imprisonment for life, or during his Majesty's pleasure." *(Consigne du Château MS.)*

Monsieur de la Reynie, was D'Argenson's predecessor, in the office of Lieutenant of Police, and was the first that held it. For the satisfaction of the curious, we subjoin the textual copy of the above, bearing date 1690:

23. *M. le Gouverneur et ses subordonnés répondront de la sûreté des prisonniers; et tiendront un registre fidèle portant la date de l'entrée au château de ceux-ci et celle de leur mise en liberté, ou bien de leur decès, dont il sera transmis tous les huit jours une copie exacte à M. de la Reynie, qui pourra, en outre, et à toute heure, demander le registre officiel afin d'en vérifier la copie qui lui aura été envoyée. S'il arrivait que ces entrées fussent irregulières, ou qu'elles eussent été falsifiées en aucune manière, ou bien qu'un prisonnier quelquonque eut quitté le château sans le consentement du Roy, apposé au bas de la lettre d'émancipation, ou sans celui de M. le Lieutenant de la Police, soit à la connaissance de M. le Gouverneur ou de tout autre fonctionnaire attaché au service de la fortresse, le Gouverneur et le fonctionnaire seront jugés comme coupables de lèze-majesté, et punis comme traitres à l'Estat. Quant au prisonnier, une fois pris, il subira la peine de mort comme le dernier des criminels, ou bien, il sera incarcéré à perpétuite, ou pendant le bon plaisir de Sa Majesté.*"

"Is it possible!" exclaimed D'Orleans, as much shocked at this horrible revelation, as at the perilous situation of his *protegé*, and shuddering at the complication of misfortunes which he had been the means of entailing upon so many innocent persons. "But if he is guiltless of any crime?" continued he.

"So much the worse, Highness," replied Jacques, mournfully; "such have greater cause to complain of the despotism of their rulers, and these, one reason the more for silencing them!"

"But this is infamous!" ejaculated the Prince, indignantly; "surely this law is never carried into effect!"

Jacques smiled as he answered:

"It is plain your Highness has remarked the strength of the walls of the Bastile! In this instance, however, the question remains open for decision!"

"Good Heavens! what is to be done?" remarked the Prince. "Ah! I have it! D'Argenson must sign a letter of emancipation in favour of St. Leu, and lodge it with St. Marc! I will see him and beg it of him!"

"You declared yourself his enemy only last night," observed Jacques! "the inducement to serve St. Leu is none of the strongest! However, you can try him!"

At this moment the door of the cell was opened noiselessly, and a matronly figure appeared in the aperture, who withdrew, after muttering a few words to Jacques, in a jargon unintelligible to D'Orleans.

"Highness," continued the spy in a subdued, almost inarticulate voice, and rising as the female made her exit, "will you come with me?"

D'Orleans coloured deeply, his thoughts reverting to Beatrice, and drawing his mantle about him, followed Jacques to the door, who inclining his head, signed to him to go out first; he obeyed, the spy closed the door, and they were both in total darkness.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE DUKE'S INTERVIEW WITH BEATRICE.

The Prince was much startled at this extraordinary proceeding, and remembering the kind of place in which he was, began to entertain misgivings with regard to his personal safety, uttering a faint exclamation of astonishment; he was the next moment somewhat reassured by the voice of his mysterious friend, who clutching him firmly by the arm, said:

"Fear nothing! These passages are as familiar to me as the streets of Paris!"

D'Orleans answered not a word, but strove to smother the disagreeable sensations that overpressed him, as his companion led or rather dragged him along the cold, damp windings of this subter-

ranean dwelling, through which the wind, every now and then, swept in gusts, sometimes warm and suffocating, and strongly impregned with an odour of mildew; at others, icy and fresh as though the circulation were unimpeded from above; once or twice he put out his hand and touched the walls, which he found clammy, moist, and slippy, his fingers indenting themselves in the soft masses of fungii that luxuriated there—the growth of centuries—whilst occasionally, a huge cobweb, dripping wet, flouted him in the face, causing him to start as from contact with some hideous reptile. Jacques—who had dispensed with the use of a torch with the prudential view of baffling the efforts of the Duke to retain any idea of the locality—continued to thread this labyrinth of passages until he reached a small door, through a crevice of which a faint glimmer of light penetrated, falling upon the opposite wall like a streak of blood: he pushed the door open and they entered the chamber of Beatrice.

In form and size it was similar to the one they had just quitted, but more comfortable in its appointments. The walls and the ceiling were white-washed, and the floor was overspread with matting as a guarantee against damp; there were three shelves, one adorned with a few books, the others appropriated to domestic conveniences, and on the table, which was oaken, and occupied by a motley assemblage of phials, and glasses, and tisanne-cups, stood a night-lamp, shedding a dim, red light around, but whose paucity was amply compensated for by the bright and cheering blaze of the crackling logs on the low hearth; three chairs—one of them with a cushion—a hassock, and a *prie-dieu*, completed, with a bed in one of the recesses, the furniture of the apartment.

The bed, around which the curtains of faded damask were closely drawn, was placed with the head in the recess, so as to leave the sides free; an elderly female—not the same who had ere-while warned the spy, but she to whom Democritus had given the name of Galatea—occupied the cushioned chair when the visiters entered, but upon a sign from Jacques, courtesied and withdrew.

"What is that? Who is there?" inquired the invalid in a faint but hurried voice, and starting as she heard the door close.

Jacques glanced at D'Orleans, signing to him to keep out of sight, and approaching the bed drew the curtains aside, replying:

"'Tis I, Mademoiselle!"

"Ah! Jacques!" answered she, recognizing his voice; "you have been a long while absent! Why did you remain so long away?" and she held out her hand, which he kissed.

"So long!" said he; 'tis scarcely three hours ago since I was here!"

"Ah, yes!" muttered the girl; "I remember now! I have slept! Oh! what happiness to sleep! To sleep and forget one's troubles!"

Here she heaved a sigh that touched D'Orleans to the quick, the tears filling his eyes when the soft voice of the only being he had every really loved again smote his ear; whilst his heart throbbed every moment more fiercely as he remembered the days of happiness

he had enjoyed in her company, though the felicity of retrospection was embittered by the painful contrast of the present with the past.

"Are you sure, Jacques," resumed Beatrice, after a brief pause, "that 'tis not three days instead of three hours? What is the day of the month?"

"We have entered on the fifteenth, Mademoiselle," answered Jacques, huskily.

"The fifteenth!" echoed she; "right! right! 'tis two months and a week exactly! How short the time seems! It is as yesterday to me! Yet I have suffered much since then! Very much!"

The hot tears coursed one another down the Prince's cheeks, for he perceived that the maiden's intellect wandered; he understood too, Jacques' motive for signing to him to remain concealed, though wondering much at the distant, formal manner in which he addressed *her*; a circumstance, which, when he remembered their relationship, gave birth to certain vague suspicions as to the truth of the spy's communication relatively to their affinity, though he could not perceive any motive for the cheat. A word, however, will solve this riddle: Jacques had not yet revealed himself to his sister, his reasons for which a retrospective glance at the events of the last two months will elucidate.

In the first place, the shock which Beatrice's constitution had sustained from her attempt at self-destruction, added to the acute physical sufferings terminating in the premature birth of her infant which this attempt induced, were casualties of themselves sufficient to engender a prostration of mind even greater than that of her frame, setting aside the ravages previously made upon the latter by the long months of mental anguish she endured, whilst immured within the lonesome cloisters of Moret, she was devising the means of escaping from the scandalous consequences of a shameful exposure: an exposure of which the stigma would attach not alone to her, but to the saintly sisterhood she had so recently joined. Beneath this accumulation of misfortunes her exquisitively sensitive mind eventually gave way, and for seven tedious weeks after her providential escape from so untimely a death, she remained almost unconscious of every thing that passed around her, seldom recognizing the hand that ministered to her necessities, or the voice that whispered consolation, or if she spoke, her thoughts constantly ran incoherently upon a diversity of subjects relating to her past history. From these aberrations, however, Jacques gleaned a few rambling, disconnected facts, the nature of which singularly interested him in the girl, by giving him room to suspect her identity with the sister from whom he had been separated since childhood; hence his solicitude for her recovery continued daily to augment, and he would sit by her bed-side for hours, gazing with tearful eyes upon her wan countenance, his heart alternately swelling with hope, or sinking with despondency, as her malady fluctuated.

In proportion as her bodily strength returned, her mind recovered something of its original tone; but the power of reflection awakened her religious fears, and in opening her eyes to the past, en-

gendered also a new and morbid hallucination which soon converted itself into a fixed idea—owing its birth, most probably, to the bias of her education—and left her a prey to the blackest melancholy and despair, totally defying the pious efforts of Father Simon to overcome it; for the latter, be it here observed, had been a resident in Lutetia from the day on which Jacques rescued him from D'Argenson's emissaries, and was constantly in attendance upon the sick girl, ministering spiritual comfort to her diseased mind.

Taking advantage of the few lucid intervals that Beatrice enjoyed, Jacques contrived, by a series of adroit questionings, to elicit additional facts bearing directly upon the subject next his heart, and which not only corroborated her former statements, but confirmed his latent suspicions as to her identity; nor could he longer entertain a doubt as to the melancholy manner of his mother's death—subsequently borne out by the Duke's testimony—though, restraining his feelings, he prudently deferred discovering himself to his sister, lest the surprise should prove fatal.

In the course of his interrogations Jacques likewise obtained a clue to Beatrice's betrayer, which, though slight, he followed up with untiring perseverance until, by the aid of other collateral evidence, he arrived at the truth; and in seeking out the Duke of Chartres, and consenting to bring him to Beatrice, he yielded less to his own inclinations or to the Duke's request, than to the earnest wishes of Beatrice herself, who impressed with a firm conviction that her dissolution was at hand, would call upon him by name, not only whilst her mind was wandering, but when it was comparatively tranquil, praying half aloud that he would come and "*see her once before she died!*"

Thus the time sped swiftly on from the night of her melancholy attempt upon her life up to the present period, the slightest excitement sufficing to bring on a paroxysm of mental bereavement that would leave her completely exhausted, and for fear of which Jacques still abstained from disburdening his heart of its oppressive load.

In the midst of the darkness that overshadowed her intellect, Beatrice retained a confused recollection of the mode of her rescue, but ever under the influence of a predominant idea, originating in her unhappy attachment, persisted in confounding her deliverer with the author of her misfortunes.

"It was Philippe"—she only knew the Duke by his Christian name—"who plunged into the water after her." His name had been the last on her lips, ere she took the fatal leap! He must have been at hand and heard her call him, for no other than he could have any motive for risking his life to save hers! Her—an unknown, unfortunate girl! She believed he loved her tenderly, because he had often told her so! It was her own fault that he had abandoned her! She ought to have consented to leave Fontainebleau when he offered to take her under his protection, and not have angered him by a refusal! Why did she retire to Moret? Were not the sisters certain to discover her position? Every day that she remained with them, increased the risk! She would lose no time! All was ready! How surprised they would be on the morrow to find her gone! She knew where to go! It was not far to

Paris! She would ask the first person she met if he knew her Philippe? No! Well! there were more people to ask the question of! Never mind that laugh! She is not crazed, although she *has* walked up from Fontainebleau to Paris to find her lover, having no other clue to him than that his name is Philippe! How people stare; and point at her! She knows what they mean! Hard-hearted scoffers! Some say she has escaped from a mad-house! But no! she is not mad; only tired, and hungry; and very, very ill! 'Tis useless threatening her with the name of D'Argenson! Who is he? Is he called Philippe? Another loud and mocking laugh! Cruel mob! But they have let her go again, and she will remain in her dark hiding-place till night—and then—then—she knows a spot where the water runs so dark, and cold, and deep! It is only a plunge, and all is over!

"How the lights dance! and how cold the wind strikes! Is death so cold! There is the bridge! She marked the place when she passed in the morning, as she fled from the mob! How lonely it is! Now! There is no one by! Hark! a step! Another moment and it will be too late! She will be discovered! If that foot-step should be Philippe's! 'Tis gone! Courage! One look at the bright moon—and at the brilliant stars—and at the deep blue sky! How quiet they seem in their beauty! But the moon is cold though bright! and the stars, though brilliant, are cheerless! and the deep blue sky smacks of the frigidity of the grave! Oh! for one ray of sunlight! only one! Yet why! The sunlight and the broad noon are for the happy! Night and its darkness for the wretched and miserable! Why should she hesitate any longer? How fearful to look down into that deep, cold gloom beneath, with Death returning the gaze! Courage! *Forgive an unhappy wretch, Great God! Philippe! Philippe! Thou could'st save me.*"

"Down! Down! Down! 'Tis done! Oh! the horrid consciousness of an unnatural death! No hope, now! Ha! A straw! What strength to grasp it! How rapidly and buoyantly it rises to the surface! Again the keen air—and the bright moon—and the brilliant stars—and the deep, blue sky! Horror! Horror! She has clutched the wheel! Higher it rises, and higher still; now sinks again! Lower, and lower, and lower! Again the hoarse plash—and the cold plunge—and the deafening rush of the gelid waters—and the still colder darkness—and the fiery, bursting brain—and the choking throat! Then this awful, awful stillness! Yes! this is death! And Philippe her lover meets her amongst the dead! 'Tis his warm arm encircles her, and bears her rapidly—whither she knows not—but on—on—on! All is suddenly blank—and dark!"

St. Marcel, meanwhile, remained ignorant of the relationship between Beatrice and Jacques, and although unable, when he began frequenting Lutetia, to disconnect the remembrance of his introduction to it from the circumstance in which it originated, the latter gradually effaced itself from his mind, until he might be said to have almost forgotten not only that such an event had ever occurred, but with it, the existence of the unhappy being whom he had so providentially rescued. On several occasions, however, he made inquiries of Jacques respecting her, receiving such answers from him as

her state of health warranted; but observing the spy's extreme reserve upon the subject, forbore to question him further, notwithstanding the vague recollection of her features that remained still impressed upon his mind like the newly awakened reflect of a dream long since numbered with the shadows of the past. His friend Democritus too, was as ignorant on this score as himself, and though equally desirous of learning whom the girl might be, abstained—from motives of delicacy towards Jacques, who always appeared pained when the subject was mentioned—from taking any steps to satisfy his curiosity, consoling himself and St. Marcel with the assurance that it would "*sooner or later come out.*" But the few words which fell from the lips of the Duke of Chartres during their brief interview in the *Salle des Gardes*, rekindled the feeling that had lain so long dormant in the breast of St. Marcel, yielding to whose earnest entreaties, Jacques took him to see Beatrice before his departure for Madrid, having first made him acquainted with the main facts of the case, which fully accounted to the young man—in his ignorance of any other motive—for the extraordinary interest the spy took in his affairs.

A very short colloquy ensued between Beatrice and her deliverer, whom she could not be made to recognize as such, her thoughts remaining fixed upon her lover, and St. Marcel took his leave with a heart torn by commiseration for her sorrows, and with the firm conviction that he had at some anterior period, beheld her features, though unable to recollect where or when.

Strange to say, this conversation remained distinctly impressed upon her fevered imagination; but as a thing of yesterday, or of some earlier day; and by one of those transitions characteristic of the disordered brain, she suddenly recurred to it, after the brief pause that followed her last allusion to her own sufferings:

"Jacques!" continued she, gazing intently at him whilst she spoke; "you remember what he said? The young man who came to see me last! When was it? Never mind! He said that when he returned I should be happy! Do you know what he meant? That I should be dead! He promised too, to send me a token of remembrance—a flower—from the sunny clime to which he is gone! It will be withered! Keep it, Jacques! It will remind you of me! They used to call *me* a flower! The flower of Fontainebleau! Poor flower! Did he not say too that he should see me again? But no! no! 'Tis here —" she laid her hand on her heart—"here, Jacques! He will never see me more! *Au revoir!* Yes! but not on earth! Where? ah, where?"

The spy knew that in speaking of her approaching dissolution, his sister spoke truth, and the tears stood in his eyes as he listened to her wanderings; D'Orleans could scarcely refrain from sobbing outright. In order to turn the tide of the maiden's thoughts into a more wholesome channel, Jacques said, as soon as she paused:

"Mademoiselle, these reflections are too gloomy to be indulged in; your fears are groundless; you are much better, and with proper care, will soon be well! You must live for—for your infant, and for its father!"

"Ah, yes!" ejaculated the young mother! pressing closer to her

heaving bosom the babe that nestled there; "yes! I must live, for my child, and for Philippe."

She burst into an hysterical flood of tears, from the contagion of which the spy was nearly yielding; but by an almost super-human effort he succeeded in preserving an appearance of stoicism. But D'Orleans could no longer control his feelings, and dashing his hat and cloak to the ground, advanced a step towards the bed, for the purpose of disclosing himself, when he was checked by a peremptory sign from Jacques, who once more addressed the weeping girl.

"You have often wished to see him, Mademoiselle," said he, with a view to provoke a more favourable juncture for introducing the Prince; who appreciating the policy as well as the prudence of this step, mastered his impatience, and still remained concealed.

"Oh, yes!" responded Beatrice; "and have prayed fervently that he might come! Is he not the father of my child? my poor innocent child! See him! Oh, yes! Once more before I die! If he only knew what I have endured for his sake! I have lost my hopes of salvation! I have incurred the Holy Virgin's displeasure, and she no longer heeds my prayers! Why has he not been here since that dreadful night? He saved me then—but shocked at my crime, abandons me to my fate! Poor fatherless babe!"

"Beatrice! Beatrice!" ejaculated D'Orleans; and unable to contain himself any longer, he precipitated himself towards the bed.

"Eh! that voice!" exclaimed the maiden, raising herself up a little; who calls me by name? It should be Philippe's voice!"

"It *is* I, Beatrice!" responded D'Orleans, as Jacques stepped a little on one side in order to afford him room to approach the bed; "dost thou not recognize me?" and seizing her hand he covered it with kisses, at the same time that he bedewed it with his tears.

The unhappy girl stared vacantly in the face of the speaker, seeming neither to understand, nor to recognize him, but her recollection gradually returning, her bosom heaved twice or thrice convulsively, whilst a stifled sigh burst from her lips as though her heart were breaking with the effort, and passing her hand over her brow, she sank back on her pillow, in a wild flood of tears. For a minute or two the deep silence was interrupted only by her sobs and the deep breathings of Jacques, who still retained his station at the head of the bed, and with a heart overflowing with conflicting sentiments over which predominated his affection for his hapless sister, stood contemplating her and the Prince, with two large tears glistening in his eyes, whence, after a momentary struggle, they slowly rolled down his manly cheeks, falling with a heavy pit, pat, upon the coverlet: here all outward evidence of his emotion ceased.

"Forgive me, Beatrice! Forgive me!" ejaculated the Duke, as soon as he could command himself sufficiently to speak. Look up! 'Tis I! Philippe!"

"Yes! Yes!" sobbed the maiden, removing her hand from her pallid countenance; "I know thy voice! 'Tis thou, indeed! But see, Philippe; see!" and she pointed to the infant that still lay sleeping on her breast; "I have not murdered him! he lives! and thou wilt forgive me! He lives, Philippe! Our child lives!"

"Let me embrace my son—" rejoined D'Orleans, as, with the hot tears trickling down his cheeks, he leant over, and imprinted a kiss on the pale cheek of the slumbering babe.

"Thou wilt forgive me, Philippe?" continued Beatrice, sobbing hysterically; "I was crazed when I did it—but I did not think of murder! Oh, no! Say thou dost forgive me!"

"Forgive thee, Beatrice? 'Tis I should, on my knees, ask pardon of *thee!* I have nothing to forgive *thee;* but if nought but my pardon will appease thee, I do give it thee!"

"I knew thou would'st," said she, her eyes glistening with wild delight; "thou art doubly its father, for had'st thou not plunged in after me—! Ah! that horrid night! But thou dost not know what I suffered! Fatigue—and cold—and hunger—and thirst—and no consolation here—" she placed her hand again upon her heart, continuing; "it beat fiercely, but it was not with joy! my blood was frozen! Oh, Philippe! I have suffered much!"

"And I am the cause of all thy sorrows, Beatrice! But cheer up! All will yet be well! Bright days are yet in store for us!"

Beatrice raised herself upon her elbow, and fixed her dark eyes full upon the Duke, gazing at him with an intensity that made him almost shudder; she then said, in a solemn, nearly inarticulate, but awfully distinct voice:

"Look at me, Philippe, and tell me; dost thou think I am, even now, of this earth?"

D'Orleans was indeed heart-stricken to perceive the fearful havoc that grief and a long malady—especially the former—had made in that fair being. Her face, strikingly resemblant to Jacques', only that it was exquisitely feminine, still retained its former loveliness; but the carnation of her cheeks had faded, and their marble pallor was rendered yet more dazzling by contrast with the ebon hue of her profuse chevelure; her eyes too—now sunken beneath their well-defined orbits—sparkled with unearthly brilliancy, seeming to swim in light, and her once voluptuous figure was shrunken and wasted by intense suffering, both mental and physical, whilst her hands seemed absolutely transparent from their extreme attenuity:

"No! no! continued the sufferer, with a sad smile; "'tis here—at my heart! I feel it here! But it will soon be over! And here too I feel it!" she now pressed a hand on her forehead; "I cannot forget it! 'Tis indelibly stamped upon my brain! Seared as with a hot iron! Oh, why, Philippe didst thou save me? Yet sure I am crazed to ask! Yes! poor child! 'Twas thou he thought of, not me!"

Casting a look of maternal solicitude upon the infant nestling on her bosom—smiling in its happy sleep with that sweet smile of innocence which belongs so exclusively to the sleep of infants—she raised herself higher in the bed, and resting her head on her hand, gazed intently at the Duke once again, and resumed:

"Why didst thou stay so long away? I have reckoned the days, and can count them, so I am not mad as they said I was!"

"Speak not thus, Beatrice, I implore thee," exclaimed D'Orleans, making an effort to overcome his emotion; "to hear thee cuts me

to the heart! Take courage in the future, and forget—try, Beatrice, to forget the past!"

"Never!" rejoined she; "never could I live long enough to forget it! I have tried to blot it out from my memory—but no! the hideous canvass is always before my eyes! I tried to forget it in death; but my hour was not come! Death would not of me! And now—now I am afraid to die! And shall I tell thee why? That horrid night! Thou rememberest it, Philippe! Even now I hear the deafening, heavy rush of the waters closing over my head! And that wheel! It still seems to drag me down into the cold, cold darkness beneath! That voice! I hear *it* too! It still bellows in my ears! 'Murderess! thou hast destroyed thy child!' I a murderess! Murder whom? what? an infant! Great God! And yet it is so!"

Reclining back upon her pillow she gave free vent to the torrent of anguish that overpowered her, shuddering with horror at the remembrance of her crime. D'Orleans sank mute and conscience-stricken on the edge of the bed. Jacques covered his eyes with his hand, but as soon as his sister's paroxysm of grief had somewhat subsided, said, with affected serenity, and in a tone deeply commiserative.

"Mademoiselle, this constant recurrence to the past unnerves you! Besides, you judge yourself too severely! The occurrence of that fatal night resulted from excess of grief! You were not morally responsible for your actions! Misfortune is not crime!"

"Ah! Jacques! answered the young girl, with an angelic smile; "you are ever the same! A good, kind friend; when I dare to pray, I pray for you, for you have been everything to me! You echo the consolatory words of the holy father who is so constantly at my bedside; but you do not know all."

"I know enough of your sufferings," rejoined Jacques, interrupting her, "to commiserate—to pity you—to sympathize with your sorrows! Let us not speak of them—let us rather look forward to happier days!"

"Oh, yes, Beatrice!" exclaimed the duke, animatedly; "let us speak of the brighter horizon before us!"

"That horizon may be bright for thee, Philippe," rejoined Beatrice, solemnly; "but for me 'tis dark and desolate; a fearful—a horrid blank! But thou shalt know all, and judge whether I have suffered!"

"Not now, Beatrice; not now," ejaculated the Prince; "thy wanderings rive my heart! Not now? For pity's sake, not now!" and he clasped his hands together in an agony of emotion, looking imploringly at the maiden, whose restless orbs flashed with unearthly fire, under the morbid excitement to which her mind was a prey.

"Yes; now!" she replied, becoming more wild and animated; thou must know it.

"Nay, then, Jacques, do thou add thy entreaties to mine, and persuade thy sister"—the spy started and cast a reprehensive glance upon the speaker—"to defer this task until her mind is more composed! See, Beatrice! thy brother and I."

"Brother! brother!" ejaculated the maiden, hurriedly; "who speaks to me of brother! Thou mockest me! I have no brother!

I had a brother once; but 'tis a long time ago—a very long time! But I recollect him—and the green meadows—and the daisies that grew there; and the bright river! Oh, yes; I was happy then—a happy child! But that time is past! A brother! No! the Bohemians took him away! I remember when! 'Twas when the snow lay on the ground—for we saw the print of their naked feet! I cried to think my brother would be like them, and walk with naked feet upon the cold ice and snow! My mother cried too when she found he had been stolen away—and so did my father when he came home from the fields! Poor father! Poor mother! Both dead! and my brother too!"

"Beatrice!" Sister! dear sister!" gasped Jacques, his immense chest heaving as though the intensity of his emotion struggled to burst the material bonds that confined it; "canst thou not believe that *I* am thy brother?" and the hot tears leapt from their source, falling in a torrent upon the hand of the girl, which he had grasped convulsively, and now covered with fraternal kisses.

Beatrice, however, responded not to his appeal, of which she did not in fact, comprehend the nature, and though she listened to his words, it was with a vacant, unintelligent gaze. She remembered her brother, it is true; but remembered him a child like herself, and her diseased mind could not picture him all at once a man. The reminiscences of her early youth remained too deeply engraven on her imagination to be effaced even by the all-absorbing intensity of her recent sorrows, whilst with regard to her brother—so long lost that he was in a measure dead to her—her memory had preserved no traces whatever, no, not even of his lineaments, nor did there exist one fact, one link to connect the past with the present—to reconcile her to the belief that the child of yesterday was the man of to-day, for her days of childhood still seemed to her a dream of yesterday only. In the recognition of her lover, her heart had spoken; the bond of love was stronger than the tie of nature; his voice suddenly awakened sympathies that lay dormant, but which, gathering strength from quiescence, burst forth with renewed energy as soon as the susceptible chord they hung upon was struck. Her brother's voice touched no cord whose vibrations could ring upon her heart—roused no slumbering sentiment; as regarded *him*, the past was a blank, the present a chaos—the future null.

A silence, a deep silence followed Jacques' out-burst of fraternal affection, but perceiving that Beatrice remained unconscious of the truth, he once more addressed her:

"Dost thou not hear me Beatrice? sister! I am the same brother that used to ramble with thee through those green meadows, and gather the flowers, that grew there! Oh, that thou would'st but call me brother once again! look at me, sister! I am indeed thy long lost brother!"

"I tell thee no!" exclaimed Beatrice, half petulantly; "did not the Bohemians steal him away?" and passing her hand across her pallid brow, she suddenly fell into a state of deep abstraction.

Jacques wiped the tears from his eyes, and drew back a pace, intimating to the Prince that the case was hopeless, and that it would be

prudent to withdraw. D'Orleans returned his glance, and gently taking Beatrice's hand, pressed it within his own.

"Beatrice!" said he; "I am going! But I will return soon—"

"Remain!" answered she abruptly, seeming to wake as from a dream; "remain, and I will tell thee something that thou knowest not of, and that shall make thy blood run as cold as mine! Thou didst deceive me! Thou didst break thy vows, and abandon me to shame and infamy! I renounced thee! To avoid thee, I fled to the holy cloister. I had better deprived myself of my loathsome existence, for I was from that hour lost! Lost! Hearest thou that? Oh, I have since then suffered the torments of the souls unblessed—the fires of purgatory consume me! And why? I have perjured my soul, and there is no salvation for me! Before the altar I vowed—yes—I solemnly vowed to live chaste! Horrid mockery! I was already a guilty, polluted thing; a defiled vessel! It was a deadly sin, and the Virgin punished me. Night after night I have laid my burning cheek upon the cold stones of my cell, and prayed for death; but it came not! Then I sought the dead, and communed with them as they walked the aisles of the church! They were the spirits of sisters departed, and pointed at me with their fleshless fingers as I knelt before the altar! They knew my crime, and that repentance dwelt not in my heart, for it yearned after thee! Yes! Even in my prayers thy image haunted my imagination! When my Creator's name was on my lips, thy form was in my thoughts! I loved but thee! I sought to mortify the rebel spirit within me, by long fastings and severe penance, but my confessions were false, for I concealed my guilt! Yet, who so saintly as Sister Angelique, first at matins, and last at vespers? The church, with its cold aisles, had charms for me that it had not for my sisters! In my cell I was alone and afraid; but there, the spirits of the dead bore me company, and I could bear them better than solitude! There too thou didst often come as of old! I knelt upon the spot thy knees had touched, and forgetting Heaven, dwelt on thee, and thought not of perdition! But my shame quickened, and I could not conceal it! I thought of murder, for I was crazed! I marked the place in the garden where I should bury the infant, and hid the knife that was to dig its grave; but I was crazed! It was at the foot of a cypress, beneath which I used often to sit! For whole weeks I nourished the thought and shuddered not! I was crazed! One night I sought the cold air to allay the fever that consumed me! I sat beneath that tree, in the pale moonlight! I slept and dreamt! There was a spot beneath my feet as of a newly-made grave—an infant's grave; and the grass grew high, and green, and flourishing upon *it*, but no where else! Then all at once I beheld nought but darkness; but soon again I saw the same grave! It was now bare, though all around it the grass was green and fresh! But on that spot the grass would not grow, and the earth was yellow and smelt faint and rank! The form of an infant lurked about that spot! it saw me, and clung to me! It was but an infant, but it had the strength of a man! It cast its cold arms about my neck, and whilst it covered my cheeks with icy kisses, dragged me lower, and lower, and lower,

till I fell with it upon its unholy sepulchre, when a voice, a tiny voice, cried—'Tis thy murdered infant's grave, and the grass shall not grow upon it!' And then I awoke! I looked to see if the grass was still green! It was, and I knelt there and prayed the Holy Virgin to deliver me from the snares of the Evil One! Yet I felt that there was no salvation for my perjured soul! Wickedness of heart grew upon me, and hypocrisy was my safe-guard! I approached the holy table with a lie in my mouth, and though vowed to religion, hated it in my heart, for it was defiled! My despair gave me courage to execute another project! I thought of flight and of thee! How easily I cheated my confiding companions! They knew nothing, and suspected nothing! Bit by bit I got a few garments together, and when all was ready, under the pretext of visiting the sick wife of a peasant in the forest, I left Moret! I sought an unfrequented spot amongst the trees, and there stript off the habiliments of a cloistered nun, and put on those I had brought! Then I buried the others under the leaves, and fled! Then came the long journey—and the lonesome roads—and the terror of being overtaken! Still I walked on! I reached Paris!—and then—! * * * * * * * * * * Great God! how fearfully I have sinned! My own life! my child's! 'Twas a fearful deed! But oh, the tortures of an evil conscience! Always here, on this bursting brain! 'Tis like fire! it scorches—scorches ever! Oh! Death must come at last to end all—"

The bewildered, bereaved girl again burst into tears, and continued for some time sobbing piteously, nor could Jacques or the Duke refrain from giving vent to their anguish:

"Oh, forgive me, Beatrice," ejaculated the latter; "forgive me for the wrong I have done thee! I have nought to plead in extenuation of my fault, but the intensity of my passion! Before Heaven I swear that I loved thee! Thou art the only being who ever did inspire me with that holy sentiment! Would I had known thee earlier—"

"Would that thou had'st never known me!' exclaimed Beatrice, interrupting him; "my heart would have been free from guilt; my conscience unsullied!"

A brief pause ensued, when she resumed, with greater calmness, and as if the violence of her malady had almost expended itself in its late outbreak:

"There, Philippe is my hand! My forgiveness is thine! I cannot forget! 'twas thou did'st save me from destruction! Leave me now! I would be alone—alone!"

"But I shall see thee again, Beatrice?" asked D'Orleans, imprinting a kiss on her meagre hand; "and our son! I must see him too! Poor babe! One kiss on his innocent cheek! I must see him awake, Beatrice! and I shall see *thee* again, shall I not?"

Beatrice gazed stedfastly into her lover's countenance, and with a solemn accent, answered:

"Yes, Philippe! I will see thee again! Jacques—my friend—shall tell thee when!"

"Thy friend, Beatrice?" observed the Duke; "say thy brother!"

"Again, my brother!" responded she, half mentally; "it cannot

be! He is dead! And yet I know not why it should not be! But no! no! I have no brother—no father—no sister—no mother—I am alone in the world—quite alone!" and again she sobbed hysterically; after the lapse of a few moments, she turned to D'Orleans, adding, "do leave me I beseech thee!"

Jacques beckoned to the Duke to come away, for he perceived that Beatrice would relapse into another fit of excitement if her dawning reason were at present over-taxed; the Duke slightly inclined his head in reply, and taking Beatrice's hand carried it to his lips without a word; then kissed the sleeping infant again, and casting a parting look upon it and upon its now abstracted mother, quitted the chamber, preceded by Jacques.

A quarter of an hour after, having been by Jacques' directions conducted, blind-folded, from Lutetia, by a different way from that by which he entered it, D'Orleans was on his way back to the Palais Royal.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CHÂTEAU LA GÂCHERIE. THE WHITE TOWER.

On reaching his chamber, after bidding the Prince good night, the spy found Democritus seated there apparently awaiting his arrival with some impatience, for he arose hastily as the former entered, and without saying a word placed a slip of paper in his hand. Jacques glanced his eye over its contents, and bit his lip, remaining awhile plunged in thought.

"When did this message go off?" asked he of his companion.

"At three this afternoon," responded Democritus.

"Who was the messenger?" inquired Jacques again.

"Maroy!" rejoined the philosopher.

The spy appeared puzzled.

"Dost thou not recollect him?" exclaimed the other.

"For the moment, no!" answered Jacques.

"He is the son of Maroy the draper on the *Petit-Pont*," resumed Democritus; "Dubois *was* his preceptor: he is his protector now! To save him from starvation or the gallows, he recommended him to D'Argenson, who took him at once into his service as courier extraordinary!"*

"I thought he was not one of us!" observed Jacques. "I recollect

* An historical fact! The Principal of the Collège de St. Michel, whom Dubois tended in the menial capacity of servant, recommended him, as soon as he had completed his studies, to the Draper Maroy, as Preceptor to his son. He next fulfilled the functions of Secretary to the President de Gourges, whose service he quitted to enter that of the Marquis de Pluvant, Master of the Wardrobe to Monsieur, Duke of Orleans, the King's brother. The Marquis introduced him to M. de St. Laurent, Sub-governor of the young Duke de Chartres, whose Preceptor he became on the death of M. de St. Laurent When he attained his subsequent high position in the State, he attached his former pupil, young Maroy, to his establishment, postilion and courier, in which capacity he had served Monseigneur D'Argenson up to that period. (*St. Simon.*)

him now! He assisted in smuggling Jeanne de St. Auney to the Convent in the Rue de Charonne! Nothing else from Grumeaud but this?" continued he, holding out the paper.

The philosopher responded negatively.

"We must circumvent D'Argenson," resumed Jacques; "the contents of that box must not fall into *his* hands! I know Jerôme of old! His fidelity will defeat the projects of his master's enemies, but it will likewise mar the good offices of his friends. This must not be Chevalier! Those papers must be ours!"

"But D'Argenson! and Maroy!" exclaimed the philosopher.

"By stratagem and promptitude only," responded Jacques, musing, "may we hope to baffle this mischief! I can depend upon *thee*!"

"Unto death!" replied the latter.

"I know it," said Jacques. "We must act at once; not an hour must be lost! A fleet horse and a disguise will serve our turn, and fortunately both are at hand!"

"Ah! I comprehend!" remarked the philosopher; "'tis to follow Maroy to la Gâcherie! But I shall never overtake him!"

"So thou reach the château even an hour later than he, is all that is necessary;" rejoined the spy. At the *Auberge du Chien qui Court*, we shall find a fleet horse; gold will procure thee others to relay! I will accompany thee to the *Auberge*, and on the way give thee thy instructions! Let us first see to the disguises!"

Jacques opened one of the large chests which adorned, or rather encumbered his chamber, and took out several suits of apparel of various ages and fashions, submitting them to the ken of the philosopher, who at length selected one that he thought of convenient dimensions. It was a plain, unpretending costume of the period, and he proceeded to invest himself therein, casting his own incongruous garb into a corner. Whilst he was thus engaged, Jacques, having returned the repudiated vestments into their former depository, opened a second chest, and extracting thence an ample frock of brown serge, a pair of sandals, a long flowing beard and a broad brimmed hat having a scollop-shell attached to the front, made them up into a bundle, after adding to them a gourd and a chaplet. By this time, Democritus was dressed, and looking at the spy's manœuvres with no inconsiderable degree of interest. The latter, his arrangements completed, placed in the philosopher's hand a *rouleau* of gold coins, which he took from a bag that was in another smaller box, and without opening his lips, put the bundle under his arm, and lighting a torch, led the way out, followed by his companion.

They proceeded for some distance through a series of long crooked passages—so long there seemed no end to them—traversing several halls similar to those already known, but more dilapidated, and tenanted only by a host of bats, which attracted by the flame of the torch flitted around it, uttering a small piercing cry that resounded through the lofty arches, and along the passages, until lost in the distance, or drowned by its own echo; now and then a troop of rats scampered across their path, pell-mell into their holes, whence, secure from the sudden danger, they would immediately after thrust their tiny black

muzzles, sniffing the departing steps of the intruders, previously to re-commencing their gambols; occasionally too an owl would dart out with a loud *whoo whoo* from the lodgings it had taken up in a convenient nook, and make a rapid exit through the nearest aperture in the masonry. At length a sudden turning brought them into a cavern of immense dimensions, obstructed, as far as the eye could reach, by huge masses of stone, hewn into blocks of various dimensions and forms, or rough as they had fallen centuries since, beneath the mattocks of the Roman soldiers. Guiding his steps by the aid of certain marks cut into the ponderous fragments that lay in his path, Jacques silently threaded his way through this endless labyrinth, without paying the slightest attention to his companion. As they advanced, the evidences of more modern labour became discernable. The detached pieces of rock increased in bigness, and were streaked with black marks, the traces of the blast by gun-powder, whilst here and there might be seen huge figures where the mass had been bodily rent, but not displaced by the violence of the concussion. Still they went on.*

At last, after traversing these vast caverns for nearly an hour, the sharp breeze of the night played once more upon their faces, and they again emerged from the bowels of the earth, into the open air.

The locality was as well known to Democritus as to his companion, who extinguishing his torch concealed it in one of the natural recesses of the quarry, having first ascertained that the materials for striking a light, deposited there for the convenience of those few acquainted with the secret, were ready for immediate use. They then directed their steps across the country until they came to the main road, along which they proceeded for about half a mile, when they stopped at a low house, covered with thatch, to which, after a short delay, they were admitted, Jacques having knocked in a peculiar manner at the door; this was the inn mentioned by the spy.

It was, as already stated, a small, low, thatched building, having a large yard behind, and a great number of out-houses annexed, built as occasion required; for each wore a different aspect. The exterior of the inn—seen by day-light—possessed no striking feature save the huge bush that surmounted the door, the curious sign surmounting *that*, representing an eccentric animal intended for a *dog current*, but which might have been with equal truth called a fox, or

* The stone quarries of the ancient Lutetians were of prodigious extent: the entrance to them, in the midst of fields and meadows, was considerably beyond where the present barrier St. Jacques is situated. They reached to the very confines of the subterranean passages of the Palais des Thermes, and in time of trouble served as a refuge to the oppressed civilians. Immense quantities of stone were taken hence to build the primitive edifices of Paris, but when the city extended itself further southward—especially during the 13th and 14th centuries—the excavations were discontinued in consequence of the danger to the new buildings from their foundations being undermined. This salutary precaution, however, was not carried into effect until several fearful accidents had taken place, by which many lives were destroyed as also much property. When the authorities determined, in 1785, to construct the Catacombs, the dangerous parts of these quarries were shored up and strengthened, and the *Tombe Issoire* formed the entrance to this new Golgotha.

(*Vide Hériouart de Thury-Description des Catacombes de Paris.*)

Within the last few years the Catacombs have been closed by the authorities, on account of their extreme danger. Many visiters have been lost there.

a sheep, so much was it like either; and the announcement, painted in red, drunken letters, reeling upon a white ground, that horse and man, could both find lodging there. "*Icy on Loge à Pié et à Cheval;*" whilst in order not to mislead the imagination of travellers, with regard to the real sign of the house, a second announcement wrought like a frame around the animal that formed the subject of the allusion, intimated that this was the Inn bearing the sign of the "*Running* Dog." "*A l'Auberge du Chieu qui Court.*"

On his way Jacques had conveyed his instructions to his companion, in a few brief sentences, the result of his meditations whilst traversing their subterranean retreat; and they had not been at the inn more than a quarter of an hour, when Democritus, mounted on the fleetest steed that the stables of the "Running Dog" possessed, might have been seen dashing by a by-path across the country, in the direction of the high-road to Chartres, *en route* for Nantes.

Jacques, meanwhile, retraced his steps to Lutetia.

On the evening of the day after that on which the above events occurred, the following scene took place at Château la Gâcherie, in the great hall usually set apart by the Baron, to receive his guests and tenantry on festivals and holidays.

It was a spacious, oblong chamber, the walls whereof were adorned with escutcheons, and banners, helmets and suits of mail, swords, bucklers, pikes and halberds, and other ancestral warlike relics, rusted, many of them, with the blood of the foreign foe-man. A long oaken table extended from end to end of the apartment, at the head of which, in a large arm-chair, his back to the fire, sat Maroy, D Argenson's emissary, surrounded by ten or a dozen men, semi-military, with sinister countenances enflamed by drink, apparently awaiting instructions from their superior, on whom Jerôme—elbowed by the soldiers—gazed with scornful defiance, and an air of resolution that seemed considerably to perplex Maroy. In a corner of the large chimney, sat another deeply interested spectator—a venerable pilgrim—with long, flowing beard, his eyes fixed upon Jerôme, whose attention he sought to excite by an admonitory glance, whenever the opportunity offered. The group was completed by the presence, at the bottom of the hall, of the two or three domestics who, with Jerôme, now formed the whole establishment, Father Anselm having retired to Nantes on the arrival of the soldiery, in order to escape the scenes of ribald mirth and debauchery, to which they gave themselves up immediately upon taking possession of the château.

Maroy—a swarthy complexioned man of diminutive statue, possessing a countenance that betrayed continual indulgence in vicious habits, and small, dark, cunning eyes that gleamed restlessly from beneath their inflamed lids, had arrived that morning at about three o'clock, having performed the entire journey from Paris, by easy stages, in thirty-six hours. His first act after making the object of his mission known to the chief agent in charge of the party in possession—was to order Jerôme to be shut up and closely guarded from holding any communication with the exterior; this done he retired to rest.

At noon he arose, and after partaking of refreshment, repaired to

the place of Jerôme's confinement, with a view to extort his secret from him, by persuasions, promises, or threats; Jerôme however was inflexible. He then instituted a search for the key that the old servant had hidden, belonging to the chamber in the white tower; but in this too he failed, as also in his subsequent attempts to break open the door; it was of the strongest materials, and resisted every effort.

The pilgrim was our old friend Democritus.

By force of hard-riding, he reached Nantes at six o'clock that morning, that is to say, within twenty-seven hours after he left Jacques at the *Auberge*. After partaking of a slight repast, he started on foot for *la Gâcherie*, taking advantage of the proximity of a vineyard to assume the disguise he had brought, and in which, at about nine o'clock, he made his appearance at the gate of the château, humbly craving its hospitality for the day. On his way to the hall, he learnt from old Thomas the porter, his conductor, of the arrival of Maroy, and the fate of Jerôme. For the former fact he was prepared, but the latter embarrassed him exceedingly, the success of his plan in a great measure depending upon his obtaining a brief, but secret interview with the old domestic; in the impossibility of doing so, however, he was obliged to await the event, and took up his seat in the great hall, where he remained the whole day, anxiously looking forward to the result of Maroy's proceedings.

It was now eight o'clock; for upwards of an hour already had Maroy alternately persuaded, and promised, and menaced, but all in vain; Jerôme remained firm to his trust.

"I tell thee," said the former, with some marks of trepidation, "that thy obstinacy will cost thee thy liberty!"

"Take it," responded Jerôme, pale, but resolute.

"Has the Bastile then no terrors for thee?" demanded the other.

The old man answered not.

"Nay, then," resumed Maroy, "thy life may become forfeit. Dost thou not know I am armed with his Majesty's authority."

"I know my duty," rejoined Jerôme, firmly; "you shall not have the box, nor will I divulge where I have buried the key of the chamber!"

"Reflect!" exclaimed the agent, menacingly.

"You have my answer!" responded the steward.

"Then by the Holy Calender of Saints," cried Maroy, "we will swing thee up to the first tree to cure thee of thy obstinacy! A rope there! Some of you get a rope! The old fool will be none the tougher for hanging."

This coarse jest excited a laugh amongst the satellites, some of whom were about to depart to procure the necessary article, when Democritus, perceiving his chances of success were fast diminishing, and that now was the only time he could hope to create a favourable juncture for executing his project, arose from his seat in the chimney-corner, and stepping up to Maroy, said, in a mild benignant voice:

"My son! let me intercede for this old man!"

The soldiers hesitated.

"Spare your intercession, father," ejaculated the aged domestic,

the tears trickling down his cheeks; "I will die rather than betray my trust!"

"Confess thyself then," shouted Maroy, "for thou *shalt* die! 'Tis fortunate for thee this venerable pilgrim came hither, or thou must have gone to thy account unshriven!"

Jerôme turned towards the pilgrim, and in a firm voice, said:

"Father! If you are ready I am!"

At this Maroy turned pale, and trembled in his chair, for he was disappointed to find his threats produce no effect, and above all mortified at the insuccess of his mission; D'Argenson's instructions, moreover, did not invest him with power to carry his menaces into effect, so far as taking away the old man's life, though, as a last resource, all others failing, he was to arrest and conduct him to Paris, preparatory to his being incarcerated in the Bastile. In the hope, however, of inducing him to give up his secret, he determined to work upon the old man's fears to the utmost limit short of depriving him of life; hence his trepidation at his victim's calmness on hearing the mandate that he had reserved for a last stroke.

Democritus—as well acquainted with the tenor of Maroy's instructions as Maroy himself—remarked his perplexity, and knowing the cause, proceeded to turn this circumstance to his own account, purposing first to throw Maroy off his guard, and then secure the confidence of Jerôme.

"Death is not to be sought, my son," said he, addressing the latter; "our holy faith alone is worthy of martyrs! Thou art bound by the laws of the Church to obey thy Sovereign as well as thy master." And he gave him a significant glance, which spoke volumes to the old man, who at once felt that the speaker was a friend.

For a moment he hesitated to reply, but re-assured by an almost imperceptible sign from the pilgrim, answered in a tremulous voice:

"Father! if I could reconcile the two, I would not hesitate!"

Democritus, suppressing his joy at the turn matters had taken, now addressed Maroy:

"My son," observed he; "thou hearest what he says; shall I exhort him?"

Maroy, entertaining no suspicions of the pilgrim's real character, or of his intentions, and glad to avail himself of any means to gain his end, readily assented to this proposition, rejoicing at the new view the venerable father had taken of the case, half regretting, nevertheless, that he had not before sought to enlist him in his service, for he was impatient to get back to Paris, knowing well that D'Argenson's favour would be the price of his success. On obtaining his acquiescence, Democritus took Jerôme aside into a remote corner, the soldiers making way for them, and they both became absorbed in a colloquy that was carried on in whispers, and of which not a sentence reached the ears of any of the assistants. A few minutes passed thus, when Democritus once more advanced towards Maroy saying:

"My son! The old man asks till to-morrow morning to consider!"

Convinced that nothing was to be gained by coercion, Maroy, after a moment's reflection, acceded to Jerôme's request, and having ap-

pointed the hour of nine to hear his final answer, left the hall, much to the relief of Democritus, who continued his conversation with Jerôme, until the agent charged with the night-watch of the château, intimated that it was time to retire. The old steward and his fellow-servants were then escorted to their chamber, the pilgrim being allowed to follow his own inclination, and to take up his quarters on the bench by the fire.

Fatigued as he was, he soon fell asleep, and had slumbered nearly three hours, when he was awakened by the pressure of a hand upon his shoulder; he started up, and recognised Jerôme.

"They are all asleep," said the old man; "follow me!"

Traversing the hall, Jerôme led the way along the passages of the southern wing, until they reached the western court in which the white tower was situated. When he came to the entrance, the old steward stopped, and removing one of the stones of the court-yard, took up the long-sought key of the chamber containing the secret closet, to which he made the best of his way, followed stealthily by Democritus, neither daring to speak, lest the sound of their voice should betray them. Jerôme entered it first.

It was a small, octagonal room, used as a lumber-room, and was filled with a variety of miscellaneous articles, heaped up confusedly in every direction; old trunks and picture frames; broken armour, and hunting-gear; arms and military accoutrements; musty papers and parchments of no value, together with a multiplicity of other objects too numerous to detail; it owned four latticed windows, through one of which the full moon shone, casting its grey light into the chamber, and amply serving Jerôme in lieu of a torch; for, as a measure of greater security, he had not brought one. By its light Democritus saw him open a door in the wall, about two feet square, situated between two of the windows, and take out thence a small iron-box, and its key.

"Here!" said he, speaking to Democritus; "quick! should they discover our absence, all will be lost! My poor dear master!"

The philosopher extracted the packet of papers from the box, concealing them beneath his frock, and was about to restore it, when a sudden thought struck him. From an old book that lay on the table by the window, he tore out half the contents, and thrusting them into the box, locked it, and handed it to Jerôme, who comprehending the object of the artifice smiled as he replaced it in the secret closet: they then retraced their steps, without exchanging a word.

At the time appointed next morning, Maroy received the box from Jerôme, and within an hour after, quitted the *château*. At noon, a venerable pilgrim might have been seen hobbling along the avenue leading from la Gâcherie to the by-road to Nantes. At four the next afternoon Democritus was once more in Lutetia. Maroy arrived at his destination a day later, *having experienced an unprecedented difficulty in procuring horses on the road.*

Democritus and Jerôme in the white tower

CHAPTER XLVII.

D'ARGENSON, MADAME DE MAINTENON, AND CHAMILLART.

THE escape of Jacques, although it incensed and disconcerted the Lieutenant of Police to the last degree, did not discourage him, but increasing his hatred of the man, whetted his appetite for revenge, and quickened his ingenuity in devising some new stratagem to get him again into his power.

On returning to the Rue St. Antoine, he found his men surrounded by the patrol and by a few of the inhabitants of this usually peaceful neighbourhood; the latter awakened by the sudden outcry, and alarmed by the report of fire-arms, having hurried to the spot for the purpose of rendering such assistance as might be needed, whilst the former were busily employed in ascertaining the cause of the riot.

The presence of D'Argenson explained every thing. Perceiving that his soldiers, though stunned and contused, were fast recovering from their stupor, thanks to the prompt administering of restoratives, he gave orders for their being conveyed to the guard-house of the Bastile, and wended his steps towards his hôtel in the Rue de Charonne.

Throwing himself into a large arm-chair which he drew up before a blazing fire, he soon became absorbed in gloomy rumination, venting his bile in a volley of execrations as he dwelt upon the events of the last few months, and especially upon the occurrences of that day, which had ended so glaringly to his discomfiture; still he despaired not, but as from time to time, in the course of his meditations, a new truth flashed across his mind suggestive of the secret means Jacques evidently had at command to forestall his projects, and baffle them whensoever he deemed necessary, his keen eyes lighted up with fierce exultation, and a savage chuckle of triumph burst from his lips. The bell of the convent adjoining his residence chimed the hour for the morning *angelus*, yet he stirred not; dawn broke, and found him still in the same position; at last he roused himself from his morbid revery, and hurrying on his cloak, hastened to his *bureau*.

Here he passed several hours examining divers packets of papers, and taking note of their contents, the occupation appearing to afford him considerable satisfaction; when his labours were completed, he returned the documents to their respective places, locked the door of his *bureau*, and putting the key into his pocket, set out for Versailles.

When the page announced his arrival, accompanied by a request to

he forthwith admitted to a private interview with Madame de Maintenon, she was closeted in her apartment, in close conference with Monsieur Michel de Chamillart, who on quitting his Majesty that morning after the *petit lever*, had repaired to her at her own request.

He was a man of three-score, with an open, benevolent countenance, and dark blue eyes sparkling with good humour; rather above the middle height, and thin of frame; was habited in the court costume of the period, and wore a black flowing wig frizzed all over his shoulders.

"What is the meaning of this, Chamillart!" said she, turning towards him, when the page had delivered his message.

The minister shrugged his shoulders.

"I had better see him," resumed she; "we may glean something that may relieve us from our embarrassment! What say you?"

Chamillart bowed, and replied:

"Perhaps it would be as well! I will retire!" and he arose for the purpose of withdrawing from the apartment.

"No, no!" ejaculated Madame de Maintenon, hurriedly; "remain; I would much rather you did!"

The minister inclined his body, and took up a standing position by the fire, his mistress—for such indeed she might be called—waving her hand to the page, as she gave the order for Monseigneur D'Argenson to be admitted.

The Lieutenant of Police appeared somewhat surprised when he found Madame de Maintenon not alone: but the gloom that for a moment darkened his countenance almost immediately vanished, his mouth becoming affected with a convulsive twitch intended for a smile, as he advanced towards the seat to which de Maintenon gracefully pointed, returning his compliments of the morning.

"Well, Monseigneur," said she, smiling; "to what circumstance am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"The honour is mine, Madame," replied he, ironically; "you are indebted for the visit to the occurrences of last night!"

"Indeed!" ejaculated she; "pray what connexion may exist between them?"

"You appeared to take great interest in the man Jacques, whom I arrested, and had conveyed to the Bastile," resumed D'Argenson, in a measured tone of voice; "I am come, Madame, to consult with you as to what is best to be done with him!"

Surprise struck Madame de Maintenon mute, nor was Chamillart less astounded, for in their ignorance that Jacques had been rescued from the hands of the Lieutenant of Police, and in their solicitude for his safety, knowing how much depended upon it, no announcement could have been more welcome or more unexpected, especially, coming from such a quarter. Moreover, Madame de Maintenon had utterly failed in interesting Louis in the spy's behalf; although she had urged D'Argenson's hatred of the man in proof of his sinister

motive for arresting him; but as this did not disprove the serious charge brought against him, the King saw in it only a stronger incentive on the part of his minister, to the exercise of that vigilance which had resulted in the discovery of Jacques' treason, nor was de Maintenon prepared to controvert the accusation, unconscious as she was of the basis wheron it rested. Her conversation with Chamillart that morning had turned chiefly upon the expediency of propitiating D'Argenson's favour as the only means of saving their agent from the fate that awaited him, but they had not arrived at any definite conclusion with regard to the best mode of bringing him over to their views, when the arrival of the Lieutenant of Police was announced.

Perceiving that Madame de Maintenon remained silent, and chuckling inwardly in anticipation of the success he hoped would result from the step he had taken, D'Argenson allowed a few moments to pass as if to enjoy her embarrassment, and resumed, slightly bowing to Chamillart:

"I am glad to meet Monsieur de Chamillart for once on an equal footing, though I did not expect to find him here."

The personage addressed looked much surprised, somewhat embarrassed by this abrupt apostrophe.

"We had better enter upon the business that brought you hither, Monseigneur," observed de Maintenon, without affording Chamillart time to frame a reply; "I am, as you say, deeply interested in the fate of Jacques, and should be happy to see him restored to liberty!"

"But, if I mistake not, Madame," remarked the Minister of Finance, "Monseigneur has accused this man of treason! The charge is too serious for even Monseigneur to liberate him without his Majesty's sanction to the act!"

"Monsieur de Chamillart is too skilful in diplomacy," responded D'Argenson with a sardonic smile, "not to appreciate the necessity of a Minister sometimes acting upon his own responsibility. There are certain matters which although of the greatest importance, never reach the ear of the King, and certain treasons likewise, the prime movers whereof it would be dangerous to sacrifice, although for appearances' sake it often becomes imperative to immolate the agent!"

"In plain terms, Monseigneur," exclaimed Madame de Maintenon, "what *do* you mean?"

"In plain terms, Madame," responded the Lieutenant of Police, "I have accused Jacques of treason; and in plain terms I do accuse you also and Monsieur de Chamillart of the same crime!"

There ensued a few moments of profound silence, during which de Maintenon and Chamillart inter-changed glances of astonishment, seemingly inquiring one of the other what this accusation could signify; at length, the former personage once more addressed D'Argenson:

"The accusation is a bold one, Monseigneur," said she, "and were it not that I have a certain respect for you as the first magistrate of

this empire, and some consideration for the courtesy due to you as my visiter, I should here bring our colloquy to a close, and order my lackeys to show you to the door! Your presumption astounds me!"

"I have not advanced one word, Madame," replied D'Argenson, nothing daunted, "that I cannot substantiate! The chain of evidence is complete. I hold the proofs in my possession at this present moment. It remains with you whether they shall be destroyed or placed in the hands of his Majesty."

"I cannot conceive what Monseigneur means!" observed Chamillart, taking a pinch of snuff.

"I have not the remotest suspicion," chimed in Madame de Maintenon.

The Lieutenant of Police gazed at them fixedly for a moment or two, and slowly withdrew from his pocket a small portfolio, from which he extracted a scrap of paper; slightly bowing to the consort of Louis Quatorze, he said, inquiringly and with matter-of-course courtesy:

"Have I your permission, Madame?"

Madame nodded affirmatively, watching D'Argenson's movements with much inquietude, but greater curiosity, Chamillart seeming altogether puzzled.

"You must know, Madame," resumed the Lieutenant of Police, occasionally looking at the paper he held in his hand, "that somewhere about the commencement of November last, I received information that a stranger, disguised as a cupuchin friar—"

Madame de Maintenon slightly started, as did Chamillart, on hearing this circumstance alluded to, both simultaneously inferring the nature of the communication that D'Argenson was about to make; the latter perceived the movement, and mistaking its cause, stopped short, saying:

"I beg pardon, Madame! Have I alarmed you?"

"Not at all," answered the lady; "pray continue!"

The Lieutenant of Police bowed, and resumed, referring to the paper for his cue:

"— disguised as a capuchin friar, had been seen lurking about in the vicinity of the Carmelites. As I could procure no clue to him, I commissioned Jacques to watch his movements and report them to me. This he did for some time; he was at last tracked to the hôtel of Monsieur de Chamillart, and the fact ascertained that he came from Madrid!"

Here the speaker fixed his eyes upon the personage in question, who becoming embarrassed, had recourse to his snuff-box; not a muscle of Madame de Maintenon's fine countenance moved; D'Argenson continued:

"At this period circumstances occurred that led me to distrust Jacques, and I set other agents to watch this friar; through them I discovered that he was in the habit of visiting Versailles, and on such

occasions entered the small park by the private gate. Need I tell you, Madame, whom he came to see?"

"It is not absolutely necessary," answered de Maintenon, slightly smiling.

"Well, Madame," resumed the former speaker; "I instituted stricter inquiries, and learnt that his name—or rather the name by which he chose to be known, was Father Pierre Simon!"

"You surprise me, Monseigneur," exclaimed Madame de Maintenon, with a look and an accent of astonishment admirably well feigned; "is not his *real* name Simon?"

And the fair interrogator's face, wore as she spoke, an expression of artlessness so true to life and nature, that D'Argenson, skilled as he was in reading the human countenance, was deceived and perplexed, although he did not betray his embarrassment by any external indice; Chamillart, too honest and straight-forward to dissimulate, coloured up to the eyes at the deceit his mistress was practising, and averted his face from D'Argenson in order not to encounter his penetrating gaze, which he felt he could not support without compromising himself and Madame de Maintenon, whose motive for working upon the credulity of the Lieutenant of Police he in vain strove to divine.

The latter personage, concealing his own surprise beneath a cunning smirk intended to mislead his hearers, resumed in answer to Madame de Maintenon's inquiry:

"Your astonishment, Madame, may be real or not; the sequel will prove which; this much I can say with regard to the capuchin friar, that I have acquired the certitude of his name being feigned."

"Nay, then," asked the lady, with animation; "what *is* his name?"

"Candour obliges me to confess, Madame, that I do not know!"

De Maintenon felt relieved of an immense load: D'Argenson continued:

"But listen to what I have further to say. As neither yourself nor Monsieur de Chamillart thought proper to treat me with the courtesy due to me as a colleague—pardon my placing you in this category, Madame—and unknown to me to receive a stranger coming from so suspicious a quarter as Madrid, with which court our relations are not of the most amicable kind, and this, notwithstanding that you were perfectly aware it is my province to know the business of every inhabitant of this city, whether a visiter or a resident, I say, that conceiving this conduct to arise from some other cause than a wish to slight me, I determined to arrest this man in order to surprise your secret in spite of your precautions—"

"Oh, Monseigneur!" ejaculated Madame de Maintenon, in reproachful accents, and holding up both her hands.

"However," continued the Lieutenant of Police, regardless of the interruption; "in this I was forestalled! Jacques by some means procured intelligence of my intentions, and contrived to rescue the friar from the hands of the men whom I had commissioned to arrest him, as he was on his road hither. This occurred about two months

ago, since which time the capuchin has never been met abroad, though I have positive information that he is concealed somewhere in the *quatier St. Jaques!*"

"But, Monseigneur," remarked Chamillart putting in a word for the sake of saving appearances, "all this does not amount to treason!"

"Ah, indeed!" retorted the other; "the treason, Monsieur, was in the motive for which you held such frequent conferences together! Did I not say last night, Madame, that I held the proofs of Jacques' guilt—aye, of his complicity with you? Since then I have procured more convincing evidence! See! these papers, found upon his person, are incontrovertible I hope!" and he took from his portfolio two letters which he placed by his side upon the table.

Now D'Argenson's assertion in the *Salle des Gardes* with regard to his possessing proofs of the spy's culpability of the crime of treason, was a falsity, hazarded for the express purpose of furthering his own ulterior designs against him, and covering the infamy he had practised of intercepting the correspondence of the Archbishop's Secretary; he knew that sooner or later the circumstance must transpire, nor was his infernal ingenuity at fault to devise a method of fixing the crime upon Jacques, for unsuspicious of Grumeaud's duplicity, he believed himself secure, the only other two witnesses against him, the unfortunate couriers, being in the Bastile.

Ignorant as were both Madame de Maintenon and Chamillart of the precise nature of the offence with which the spy was charged, though both doubted its being a treasonable act, their anxiety to behold the proofs which the letters alluded to, was sufficiently strong to satisfy D'Argenson that they were deeply implicated in the secret plot—whatever its nature—to which he had so surreptitiously obtained the clue, and this circumstance, added to his belief that he now held them in his power, strengthened him in the resolution he had taken of forcing them to admit him into their confidence in spite of their own reluctance.

"I have discovered a plot, Madame," continued he, apparently taking delight in tantalizing her and Chamillart, by leaving the letters a little open, "in which you both play a prominent part! Its nature I do not yet know, and I candidly confess it; but that knowledge will come, for I have at command infallible means of acquiring it. This capuchin is another party privy to the same, and Jacques the agent through whom the correspondence is carried on. All this I have discovered. Also that His Majesty is ignorant of its existence! And now, Madame, and you, Monsieur Chamillart—am I to be *of* the party or *against* it? Answer me, that I may at once decide how to act! I tell you, now, I will not temporize! It must be no or yes!"

"Well, Monseigneur," observed Madame de Maintenon, with consummate coolness, though with something of raillery in her tone; "I have listened to your tirade very patiently, and only that I pity the error into which you appear to have fallen, I could in good truth laugh

out right heartily! Presuming however, for the sake of argument, that I *am*—but mind, I do not admit the fact—I say, presuming that I *am* mixed up in some plot which is to end by over-throwing the monarchy, or by some other dreadful political earthquake, and that I should refuse to take you into the triumvirate, what would you do?"

"Refuse, and you shall know, Madame," was the laconic reply.

"Then, Monseigneur," rejoined de Maintenon, "I do assure you I am utterly ignorant of the *treason* you allege against me! Your proofs are there, say you? Let me look at them!"

At this moment there entered a page, who brought in a small sealed paper upon a salver, and handing it to Madame de Maintenon, withdrew.

The lady opened the note, and read it, without changing countenance, then passed it to Chamillart, treading on his foot to warn him against betraying his feelings. The minister understood the hint, and after perusing the missive, restored it to its legitimate owner, with whom he exchanged a slight smile; the billet was couched in these terms:

"*Madame,*

I am safe. I was rescued from D'Argenson's hands when within a stone's throw of the Bastile, whither I was being conveyed. I take the earliest opportunity of informing you of the fact. A messenger shall leave this city for Madrid this evening, as agreed upon between you and Father Simon. I have my eye upon the man. I can depend upon him.

Jacques."

Conceiving the message to relate to some private matter between themselves, D'Argenson waited until they had read it, and in reply to Madame de Maintenon's request, said, taking up one of the letters:

"With your permission, Madame, I will read this aloud."

De Maintenon gave her assent, and D'Argenson read, aloud, the contents of the letter abstracted from the packet addressed to the Private Secretary of the Archbishop of Paris, which, as will probably be remembered, bore a superscription to the Archbishop of Tolédo, and came from Cardinal de Janson at Rome.

De Maintenon listened with well-feigned astonishment, and as the Lieutenant of Police came to an end, burst out with the exclamation:

"Astonishing!" adding, "pray read the other, Monseigneur!"

Great an adept as was D'Argenson in dissimulation of every kind, de Maintenon's air and tone were so truthful that he began almost to doubt his own conviction of her participation in the plot he sought to unravel: he looked at her fixedly to note any change that might become apparent in her countenance, but it remained immobile as marble, and expressive only of profound mystification and surprise: Chamillart, meanwhile, was assiduous in his attentions to his snuff-box.

"This letter," resumed the Lieutenant of Police, looking up at the Minister as he unfolded the second missive, "is addressed to Monsieur de Chamillart!"

"Ah, ah!" exclaimed Madame de Maintenon, with an accent of still greater wonderment; "this grows interesting!" and turning half-round, as if for the purpose of gathering up her dress closer to her person, she took advantage of the opportunity to bestow a slight frown upon the individual in question, as an admonishment to silence: D'Argenson commenced reading.

It was the letter signed D'Harcourt, the Ambassador from the court of Versailles to that of Madrid, and as the reader dwelt upon each point, he narrowly watched the features of the Minister to whom the despatch was directed in order to detect some indice of what was passing in his mind; but Chamillart, taking the hint from his mistress, feigned astonishment, and in answer to a remark made by D'Argenson relatively to what he, Chamillart, thought of this, replied:

"Astounding! I am altogether confounded!"

"And you say, Monseigneur," observed Madame de Maintenon, "that you took these papers from Jacques, last night!"

"I did, Madame!" replied D'Argenson with unblushing effrontery, totally unconscious that both she and the minister had already been made acquainted with the contents of both despatches.

Madame de Maintenon sunk back into her chair, her fine eyes bent full upon the livid face of the Lieutenant of Police, and throwing up her hands, ejaculated:

"Holy Virgin! what infamous treachery!"

"Yes, Madame," remarked D'Argenson; "this is Jacques! As yet, I have found only these about him, but others upon the same subject have evidently preceded them, and more have yet to come! If I cannot get at the former, I will take care to procure the latter. They cannot but fall into my hands; my measures are already taken. You see Madame, and you too, Monsieur de Chamillart, that I have it in my power to serve your projects or to mar them!"

"*Our projects*, Monseigneur!" quickly observed de Maintenon, casting a reprehensive glance upon Chamillart, who had advanced a step for the purpose of replying; "what do you mean? Pray explain! What have those letters to do with us? or with the crime you have so unwarrantably brought against us!"

"I surely have spoken plainly enough, Madame," responded he; "I cannot be mistaken! You must know something of this affair! This letter to Monsieur de Chamillart with whom you are in daily communication—and this other one addressed to the Archbishop of Toledo—Father Simon I mean—for I entertain no doubt but that they are one person—I say that all these facts confirm your complicity with—"

"Monseigneur!" exclaimed Madame de Maintenon, interrupting him; "there is treachery somewhere! Those letters evidently refer to some important transaction, but of which I am entirely ignorant;

I will also answer for Monsieur de Chamillart! How came they in Jacques' possession?"

D'Argenson, unprepared for this *contre-coup*, actually trembled from head to foot with disappointment and perplexity; he answered:

"I know not, Madame!"

"Then, Monseigneur, you must discover! Knowing Jacques to have intercepted the correspondence of His Majesty's Ministers, as you doubtless did last night, you were right to arrest him! This is treason of the worst kind! But of this crime I solemnly swear both myself and Chamillart are innocent!"

"But this Father Simon, Madame! You have received him privately, at all times!"

"What a poor foundation for such a grave accusation as that you allege against me, Monseigneur! You say Father Simon is Archbishop of Toledo! According to this letter he is also a Cardinal—but I knew him, and know him still, only as a holy man of edifying conversation, with whom and the venerable Pére la Chaise, I love to pass an hour apart from the turmoil and gaiety of the court!"

"He was twice seen at Monsieur de Chamillart's hôtel, Madame."

"Had he been watched out with as much care as he was, apparently, watched in, Monseigneur, you would have known that upon both occasions he accompanied Monsieur de Chamillart hither!"

"But this letter," observed D'Argenson; "what says Monsieur de Chamillart to it?"

"I know nothing about it," answered the latter, with desperate earnestness, and taking snuff in abundance.

"And of course that must have preceded it?" asked the other, eying him intently.

"Nothing at all," responded Chamillart, looking at his mistress, who rewarded him for this diplomatic lie, by a kindly smile of encouragement.

"*Tonnerre-dieu!* muttered D'Argenson.

"I should say, Monseigneur," suggested de Maintenon, following up the advantage she had gained, "that Jacques must have intercepted the whole correspondence that preceded these two letters, since we know nothing about it!"

"Yes, Madame; doubtless," stammered the mortified Lieutenant of Police, hardly knowing what to say: "I will lay the whole matter before the King."

"Stop, Monseigneur," exclaimed the lady, who had strong reasons for dissuading him from such a course; "that would be too precipitate! His Majesty's impetuosity would perhaps bring this plot or his conspiracy, or this whatever you choose to call it, to a crisis! 'Tis better to learn more of it before you act! You say you have means at command to do this effectually; what are these means?"

"That is my secret, Madame," replied the Lieutenant of Police.

"Oh, very well, Monseigneur!" exclaimed she; "we know that our interests and our personal safety cannot be in better hands! But

what say you, Chamillart? Would it be advisable to inform His Majesty of this transaction!"

"Perhaps Monseigneur D'Argenson will counsel us how to act for the best," responded the minister, anxious to relieve himself of an unthankful office; "what is your opinion Monseigneur?"

"I think it will be prudent to temporize," answered the latter, thoughtfully; "I am certain of procuring fresh information shortly, and will then confer with you further!"

There followed a brief pause, which neither Madame de Maintenon nor Chamillart sought to interrupt, perceiving that the Lieutenant of Police had yet something to say, though apparently reluctant to speak; at length he again addressed them:

"May I hope, Madame," observed he, with some embarrassment, "that the trivial differences which have hitherto existed between myself and you and Monsieur de Chamillart, are at an end? We can mutually aid one another; but any rivalry must prove detrimental to all! I can be a staunch friend, or a bitter enemy? Is it peace or war?"

"Oh, peace, Monseigneur, peace," answered Madame de Maintenon, smiling.

"By all means, peace," echoed the minister, smiling too.

"Peace be it, then, Madame," exclaimed D'Argenson, chuckling over the compact, which he considered a master-stroke of policy; "I will sift this plot to the bottom, and we will conjointly share the triumph of the discovery! Could I but catch this Father Simon, I would make short work of it! Pray Madame, when did you see him last?"

"Oh, some time ago," responded de Maintenon evasively.

"Never mind! we shall trap him yet!" cried the Lieutenant of Police, refolding the letters and replacing them in his portfolio; "I will set a watch for him! He shall not evade me the next time he comes hither!"

"And Jacques, Monseigneur," said the lady; "you came to consult me how to dispose of him? What will you do with *him*?"

"*Hang* him, Madame!" responded the Lieutenant of Police, about to depart.

"I *would*, Monseigneur!" remarked she.

"I will, Madame!" retorted D'Argenson, grating his teeth, as he mentally added: "if I catch him again!"

"Meanwhile, Monseigneur," continued Madame de Maintenon, taking malicious pleasure in torturing him by questions which she knew he could not answer; "what have you done with him?"

The face of the Lieutenant of Police was livid with rage, when he turned for the purpose of confronting her; bethinking himself all at once, however, and not observing anything in his fair interrogator's countenance that could warrant him in entertaining a suspicion of her sincerity, he mastered his emotion, and by way of a saving clause risked to cover himself in the event of her learning of Jacques' escape, answered:

"I gave orders for him to be taken to the Bastile, last night; he should now be there!" and with this he bowed to her and to Chamillart, and abruptly took his leave, muttering to himself as he departed:

"Fools! I have fairly out-witted them this time! I have got the game into my own hands, and will keep it! Poor dupes!"

"Well, Chamillart," said de Maintenon as D'Argenson quitted the apartment; "is not this an unexpected stroke of good-fortune?"

"It is indeed, Madame! But how about Monseigneur de Toledo! He promised to be here at noon to-morrow!"

"He must not on any account come to Versailles, Chamillart! It would not be safe! You must warn him immediately on your return to Paris! You can depend upon your messenger of course?"

"As upon myself, Madame!"

"Jacques must be made acquainted with all that has occurred this morning," resumed Madame de Maintenon, "for I do not know how we should manage without his assistance! D'Argenson little suspects that the couriers are stopped before they reach Paris! It was an admirable plan of Jacques, and the only one likely to prove effectual against such treachery as we have to combat.

"I am almost of opinion that it would be prudent to inform His Majesty of what we have in hand," remarked the minister; "D'Argenson may forestall us; besides, the step would guarantee us against future mis-chances of this kind!"

"Leave the matter in my hands, Chamillart! I have set my mind upon accomplishing this great task unassisted! The King can conquer empires only by force of arms! He cannot condescend to the thousand trickeries of diplomacy! Did he suspect the agency that is at work, and that will in all probability assure us the victory, his pride would not suffer him to profit by it! He has already failed himself, and would never pardon us for succeeding! A great, a glorious triumph alone would reconcile him to it, but the triumph must be achieved first! No, no, Chamillart! His Majesty must not be apprized of any thing yet! If Monseigneur D'Argenson should betray us, let him! It will then be time enough to speak! But before that period, Charles may be dead, and this knotty question of the succession settled! Much, indeed every thing now depends upon our decision and promptitude! Bold measures supported by our party at Rome and at Madrid must insure us success! Meanwhile we must continue to cajole D'Argenson to keep him quiet! Holy Virgin, what a consummate hypocrite is he!"

Now Chamillart's conscience was more tender than this part of the anatomy of a minister is usually found to be, and smote him very hard as he was about to acquiesce in his mistress's condemnation of the personage in question for prevarication, stifling his words in their birth; whether Madame de Maintenon's conscience was affected with a similar nervous twinge at the same moment, it is not possible to affirm, but certain it is that their eyes met, and had not sooner met than the countenance of each became slightly flushed, and an awkward, though brief pause ensued, which the lady broke:

"I think we understand each other, Chamillart," said she, holding out her hand, a faint smile playing about her eloquent mouth; "in diplomacy the end justifies the means! Let me see you again as soon as any new circumstance transpires!"

The minister took the fair hand extended to him, and pressing it respectfully to his lips, bowed and withdrew. Madame de Maintenon looked after him as he disappeared, and resting her elbow upon the table and her cheek on her hand, sunk into a revery that lasted for nearly an hour. When she arose her eyes were a trifle humid, and her cheek flushed, and with a deep sigh she ejaculated, at the same time applying her hand to the bell:

"Would that Louis Quatorze could be Louis Onze, without being, less than Louis Quatorze! This question had long since been settled, and I should have been spared much anguish of mind!"

An attendant appeared in obedience to her summons.

"Bear my respects to the venerable Father la Chaise," continued she, "and tell him that I wish—if convenient to him—to see him in my oratory an hour hence! I shall be there to receive him!"

The attendant bowed and retired; shortly after Madame de Maintenon repaired to her oratory.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE RETURN OF THE MESSENGER.

The success of the artifice D'Argenson had employed to over-reach Madame de Maintenon and Michel de Chamillart, and the advantage he flattered himself he had thus obtained over them, in some measure compensated for the bitterness of his disappointment at the unexpected rescue of Jacques, whose re-capture, however, he looked upon as eventually certain, confiding in the multiplicity of the resources at his command, and the fruitfulness of his invention to devise others if these should fail.

The late incidents at the *Cep-de-Vigne* had all at once afforded him a new clue to the secret haunt of the spy—a clue he had long sought in vain, and which, indeed, he would not now have procured had he depended solely upon the vigilance of the agents at first employed to track him, all of whom belonged to the confraternity of Lutetians, whose existence D'Argenson did not even suspect, and of whose fidelity he in consequence entertained no doubts until the spy's continual evasion of the many snares laid to entrap him, raised vague urmises in his mind that all was not right. His suspicions once

awakened, he did not rest until he had devised a mode of baffling the treachery he conceived to be practised, and the first grand result of his new measures was the tracking of Jacques to Maitre Chopin's establishment, the issue of which is known.

The presence of the spy at Madame de Maintenon's masque was an event D'Argenson never contemplated, and the opportunity for arresting him with *éclat* was one too good to be neglected; he considered it as a stroke of good fortune, and exulted in it the more that it came unexpectedly; hence his great mortification at Jacques' subsequent escape, the secret agency through which it was effected remaining to him a paradox; however, as already stated, he consoled himself for his defeat by the victory gained over his ministerial brother and the king's consort, and chuckled still—perhaps not without cause—as he devised new schemes for the spy's re-capture.

With regard to the Baron and his daughter Julie, his mind was at rest, so far as the villainy that lurked there would allow; he held them in his power, entirely, and only deferred striking the final blow that he meditated, in order that his vengeance should be the more complete. In procuring a special warrant from the king for their detention during his "good pleasure," he had placed it out of his own power to set them at liberty even had he been so inclined; nothing less than the monarch's sign-manual could now open their prison-doors, and he resolved to bring into play every stratagem, every subtlety his fertile invention could suggest, to prevent the exercise of the royal prerogative in their favour. He had already once tested the value Louis set upon his ministerial services, to enhance which for his own ulterior views, he purposed first to unravel the plot referred to in the letters he had abstracted, and then to divulge it to the king, regardless of his pledge to de Maintenon and Chamillart, whom he could not, upon mature reflection, altogether absolve from participation in the political intrigue he knew to be on foot, though he had not yet discovered its precise object: by this two-fold treachery—calculating upon the peculiar character of his royal master—he hoped to encompass the downfall of Chamillart, the removal of de Maintenon from the immediate focus of political influence, and insure his own elevation to higher offices, aiming at the cumulation of these conjointly with that of Lieutenant of the Police.

But in the midst of his self-congratulations, a dark cloud shed a gloom over his mind; he was uncertain as to the fate of the young Count de St. Angin.

On the same day that Schwillwein—then only a colour-sergeant in one of the infantry regiments of the line—delivered to the care of Gertrude Leroux the midwife, the infant that D'Argenson had commissioned him to bring to Paris, a letter arrived addressed to this female containing certain instructions relatively to the disposal of the child; she read them, but shuddered as she read: they were, however, peremptory. Comply with them she could not, nor durst she refuse, for fear of exciting the displeasure of the young Seigneur

D'Argenson, lest in revenge he should inform the King's Procurator, or the Lieutenant Criminal, of sundry misdemeanours committed by her in the course of her professional career, of which he had, by some untoward circumstance, obtained cognizance, and the penalty of which was infamous to the last degree. In this dilemma she resolved upon a middle course. Stripping the child of every article he possessed, and that might lead to a discovery of his identity at a future day, she gave him other clothing, and after keeping him for a few days—still wavering in her purpose—one night administered to him a narcotic, and whilst he was dead asleep, carried him, beneath her cloak, to a distant part of the city, and laying him down in a door-way, abandoned him. Her next care was to inform D'Argenson, that "*his child had died suddenly one night in convulsions.*" Fortunately for her, he did not return to Paris for some years, or in spite of her artifice she might have been discovered, for he was not a man to be easily cheated; as it was, he believed the child dead, and acted accordingly. Some time after, Gertrude Leroux disappeared from the neighbourhood, and was never heard of again.

But D'Argenson, notwithstanding that he had no reason to doubt the midwife's word, still entertained a vague presentiment that the child was living, and like the Baron de St. Auney, though from motives far different, clung to the presentiment as if it were a fact, until he almost believed in the reality of his own imaginings. This feeling grew stronger when the events recounted in these pages occurred; still it was only a presentiment; yet so much more definite, so all absorbing, that he began to act upon it as a truth, enlisting Jacques in the service. What Jacques did is known; it remains to be told how that D'Argenson himself one day met St. Marcel, face to face; he was struck with the young man's features, for they were those of Constance de St. Auney, which remained too deeply engraven on his memory for her living likeness to cross his path unnoticed. He saw him again, and again, and each time his conviction was stronger. On the morning that he met him at the gate of the Luxembourg gardens, he had just seen Jeanne de St. Auney; Julie and the Baron only a few days before. The family resemblance was too striking to be mistaken; besides, he had not forgotten the late Count's face, nor his keen eye; thus his suspicion amounted almost to certitude. He at once set a watch upon him, and by a reference to the army-books, traced the young man's military career, backwards, to a few months antecedent to the battle of Fleurus, when he first entered the ranks, having abandoned the drum for the musket. But here his investigations were effectually checked. The names of the various regiments he had served in had been changed, and some of the regiments themselves either dis-banded or re-formed; he next instituted inquiry amongst his former comrades, and ascertained the important fact that St. Marcel was a foundling, and had been an *enfant de troupe;* upon this he issued an order for his arrest, for prudential reasons commanding him to be taken when he returned from

Versailles, hoping thus to baffle inquiry relatively to his disappearance, whereas his capture at the *château* would have excited suspicion. It was, therefore, with some anxiety that he awaited the result of his machinations, little dreaming of the secret influence at work to rescue the young man from the dreadful fate that awaited him.

In the hope of procuring other information concerning the Baron and his family, or some more positive clue to the identity of the young Count de St. Angin—for notwithstanding his strong presentiments, D'Argenson was not certain that St. Marcel was he—Maroy had been despatched to *Château la Gâcherie* upon the faith of Jerôme's postscript.

The contents of the box D'Argenson knew to be important, from the fact of the Baron having intended to bring them to Paris, hence he looked forward to the arrival of his messenger with the greatest impatience, wondering much what could delay him so long on the road; nor was he less vexed to find that St. Marcel had not yet been taken, though six whole days had now elapsed since the issue of the *lettre-de-cachet* against him.

He had been intently engaged the whole day at his *Bureau* receiving the reports of his various emissaries, and entering them, as usual, in his Book; it was growing dusk, but instead of lighting the lamp, he threw a log of wood on the fire, and drawing his large arm-chair before the cheerful blaze, fell into a drowsy revery induced by fatigue and the warmth together, but from which he was aroused by a light knock at the door.

In obedience to his peremptory order to "come in," the door opened, and a small boy made his appearance, who, on entering saluted the Lieutenant of Police with a low bow.

"Ah! 'tis thou, Germain!" said the latter, in a more kindly tone than was usual with him, but eyeing the boy askance; "well?"

The lad was about eleven or twelve years of age, alert in his movements, with an ingenuous face and a frank smile; his eyes were sharp, and wandered restlessly about, nor seemed at all affected by the steady gaze of the official in the chair; he was poorly dressed, though cleanly, and stood boldly erect as he answered:

"Yes! 'tis I!"

"Thou hast brought me news, of course, Germain?"

"Of course!" was the brief response.

"Well! what hast thou to say;"

"I did as you wished!"

"Do as I wish now! and tell me all thou hast learnt!"

"I have not learnt much, but I'll tell you what I saw!"

"Wait! I'll light the lamp," said D'Argenson; "I must note what thou say'st!"

The Lieutenant of Police lighted the lamp, drew his chair back to the table, and dipping his pen into the ink, exclaimed:

"Tuesday! Shrove Tuesday!"

"Nothing," replied the boy.

"Wednesday then!"

"I did'nt begin to watch till night! But I didn't see any thing particular, till twelve o'clock, when a cavalier walked into Chopin's, and they had some wine together! I crept up to the door to listen to what they said, but I couldn't hear! Just as I was getting closer up, Chopin saw me and cried out. The cavalier turned about to see who it was, but I was off and so he didn't find me out"

D'Argenson wrote as the boy gave his account, and inquired if he knew the cavalier?

"Yes!" answered the boy; "it was Monseigneur the Duke of Chartres!"

"The Duke of Chartres!" reiterated D'Argenson; "art thou sure?"

"Yes! I scrambled after the money that he threw amongst the crowd, the day before, and I heard the people cry out, '*Vive le Duc de Chartres!*' He was muffled up in a cloak, but I knew him again for all that!"

"Go on, boy," observed the Lieutenant of Police, writing.

"Well, after a bit I came back; Chopin was shutting up, and Monseigneur was in the little parlour! That's all!"

"Did'st thou not see him come out!"

"He didn't come out! at least I didn't see him!"

D'Argenson seemed struck with this fact, and pondered deeply awhile, muttering:

"Strange! I know no harm came to him, for I saw him only this morning! He avoided me! What *could* he want there? Anything else, Germain?"

"No! only what my little brother saw?"

"Ah! and what did he see?"

"Why, I told you I didn't begin watching till night, but I began early on Wednesday morning, and kept at it till I was tired, and then I asked Paul to watch for me whilst I went to sleep! While I was asleep he saw a fine coach drive up to Chopin's door, and two masquers get into it; two friars!"

D'Argenson started.

"The coach drove away," resumed the lad; "and in about an hour or so came back! The two friars got out of it, and with them a young officer: one of *them* that always go with the king!"

"The Musketeers," ejaculated D'Argenson to himself; "this is singular indeed! Could it have been St. Marcel! If so, this would explain his absence;" here he looked at the boy, exclaiming: "well?"

"They all three went into Chopin's, and then the coach drove off! When I woke up, Paul told me all that!"

"And is this all, boy?"

"Yes! since then I havn't seen any thing!"

"Here!" observed D'Argenson, tendering his hand to the lad; "here are two pieces of gold! One for thee, and one for thy brother! Keep a good look out, and let me see thee again as soon as thou hast any more news to give me! Is thy mother better?"

"Yes!" replied Germain; "since you gave me that piece of gold to watch Chopin's house, she has had food to eat, and *that's* made her better! But Chopin's been very good to us all, and I don't like to watch him so! You don't want to harm him do you? Because if I thought you did I'd tell him of it!"

"No, no, boy! I don't wish him harm! I wish to serve him! Don't say any thing to him, or thou wilt get him into trouble!" and he added in a *carneying* voice; "Thou would'st not like to see a friend in trouble, eh, Germain?"

"No!" replied the boy; and casting a strange look of uneasiness at his employer, he bowed and left the apartment.

"I must not let that urchin suspect the nature of his employment," muttered D'Argenson, as the lad disappeared, "or I shall lose a valuable auxiliary! Ah, ah, ah! This was a good thought of mine! Children are not suspected! How fortunate they live opposite the *cabaret!* I have no doubt but that one of these Capuchins was Simon, and the other Jacques! Oh, oh! Maitre Chopin! I'll make thee pay for this! *mort-dieu!* Thy accursed cellars lost me eleven thousand crowns! But caution—caution and patience! I'll strike the blow when they least expect it! If they choose to burrow like rats, I'll ferret them out, *sang-dieu!*"

With these words the Lieutenant of Police began pacing the apartment, occasionally uttering exclamations of impatience or of exultation according to the tenor of his meditations; at last he stopped short before the fire and turning his back to it, crossed his hands behind him, and remained thus, for some time, entirely absorbed; a noise caused him to start; he raised his head; Maroy stood before him.

At sight of his emissary, a slight flush of anxiety tinged the saffron hue of his cheek, but it instantly subsided, as he ejaculated with a frown of discontent upon his brow: "*at last!*"

The emissary replied not a word; he even smiled at his employer's darkening visage, seeming to chuckle over his approaching triumph, and unfolding his cloak, handed him the box.

"This is well," observed D'Argenson, eagerly stretching forth his hand to receive the coveted treasure; "what passed?"

Maroy related every thing circumstantially, from the period of his arrival at la Gâcherie to that of his departure therefrom, his employer listening with great attention: he added in conclusion:

"'Tis to the venerable pilgrim's counsels, more than to the threats I held out, that I owe the complete success of my mission. I hope Monseigneur is satisfied!"

"But how is it thy return is so tardy?" inquired D'Argenson, applying the key to the box.

"I could procure no horses!" replied Maroy; "some cavalier who was hastening to Paris from the south had retained them before-hand! It was with great difficulty, and only by force of bribery that I got the sorriest jades! However, here I am!"

D'Argenson had opened the box, and all anxious to peer into its

contents, unfolded the roll of paper Democritus had thrust into it; he turned deadly livid as his eye glanced over the torn leaves, staring at Maroy with an expression of blank dismay that the other was at a loss to account for:

"What is the matter, Monseigneur?" inquired he in a breathless, almost inaudible tone of voice.

"Cheated! Duped! by all that is infernal!" gasped the Lieutenant of Police.

"But—how, Monseigneur?" stammered the chap-fallen emissary.

"'Tis a trick of Jerome's—the old dotard—" retorted D'Argenson; "he has abstracted the papers and substituted this rubbish to lull suspicion! *Tonnerre dieu!* Why didst not thou open the box!"

"Monseigneur gave me no orders," faltered Maroy.

"Orders!" vociferated the Lieutenant of Police, hurling the box behind the fire; "does a man want orders to use his common sense! Fool! Idiot! *Machine!* Leave me!"

"But Monseigneur! hear me—" remonstrated the other:

"Go, I say," shouted the other in a voice of thunder: "or by St. Marc I shall strangle thee!"

Terrified by the hideous expression of D'Argenson's countenance, the contortions of which as he strove to master his anger were frightful to behold, Maroy made a precipitate retreat, leaving his employer, writhing under this unexpected stroke of ill-fortune, and vowing to be speedily revenged upon Jerome.

CHAPTER XLIX.

NUMBER TWO LA BERTAUDIÈRE. D'ARGENSON AND JULIE.

MEANWHILE Julie's position in the Bastile remained unchanged; ever the same monotonous existence; the same almost absolute solitude. She was, however, no longer importuned by obtrusive visits at unseasonable hours, from Corbé and Riquelet, for although they still occasionally came into her cell under various frivolous pretexts, they entirely failed, thanks to the watchfulness of Ru, to catch her again alone, their joint artifices availing nothing against the dogged resolution of the *porté-clefs*, and the tenacity of the matron in remaining with her charge.

It may be conceived that the escape of St. Leu from the *calotte* of the same tower in which she was herself confined, could not remain a

secret to her; and when on the following morning Sister Bridget recounted the particulars of his evasion, assuring her that he had, although wounded, effectually baffled his pursuers, she fell on her knees, and with sobs and tears thanked Him above to whose protecting hand her lover owed his safety, fervently praying that the same Great Power would continue to shield him from harm; from this period no further tidings of his fate reached her, nor could Sister Bridget relieve her anxiety, she being equally as ignorant on this head as herself.

She had learnt of her father's re-incarceration only on the day of her interview with St. Leu, when the Baron had been already six weeks a prisoner; for Jacques, through whose medium Jeanne had been enabled to convey this melancholy intelligence to her sister, had experienced the greatest difficulty in acquitting himself successfully of the mission he had voluntarily undertaken, owing to the extreme vigilance of the officers and the soldiers of the *château*.

Since the night of the Baron's arrest the spy had not dared risk his person again within the walls, though still possessing a safe-conduct, his being at variance with the Lieutenant of Police rendering such a step hazardous to the last degree, this functionary having it in his power to annul the document without previous warning, whenever time he thought proper: whilst the mode in which the unfortunate Baron had been trapped, opened his eyes to the possibility of a like fate awaiting himself. There was no means of communicating with Monsieur de Joncas, by letter, as Jacques knew that the correspondence of the garrison with the exterior, passed first through the hands of St. Marc and was scrupulously inspected by him;* only one alternative remained; namely, to wait until the time came round again for Ru's holiday—for all the functionaries of the Bastile enjoyed in turn, under certain stringent restrictions, the privilege of a day out—"*jour de sorbie*"—which day the *porté-clefs* invariably passed at the establishment of the vintner Pommier, who, it will be remembered, kept the *cabaret* called the *Grappe de Raisins*, situated at the corner of the *Rue des Tournelles*, immediately over against the entrance to the *château*.

At length the expected day arrived; Pommier despatched a message to Jacques to inform him that Ru was come, which message

* This inquisitorial proceeding was first introduced by D'Argenson, and in 1702 became incorporated with the new body of standing laws that he drew up for the police of the château. This particular law, however, was for the special guidance of the Governor and the Lieutenant-Governor only, and remained a total secret to every other functionary connected with the fortress, whose correspondence with the exterior was relentlessly taken note of in a book kept for that purpose, and called the "*Livre des Correspondences.*" The chief object of this infamous surveillance was to effectually prevent what passed within from transpiring abroad, and *vice versâ*, as also to thwart any attempt that might be made by the friends of prisoners to procure intelligence of them through any save the regular channel; which, be it here said, was oftener closed than otherwise, according to the caprice of the Governor, or the Minister, or the reigning favourite, male or female.

Jacques instantly responded to by repairing to the *cabaret*. By exciting his cupidity, the spy succeeded in converting the *porte-clefs* into a willing auxiliary, and he readily undertook to deliver the letters, thrusting them into his books to evade the scrutiny of the officer, whose duty it was to search the person of those who passed the day out, immediately upon their return, and before they resumed their duties; Ru promised moreover, for certain considerations, to inform Jacques of whatever circumstances came under his observation, in order to which they agreed upon the means to be adopted for eluding the vigilance of the authorities, and separated.

Julie's anguish was extreme on learning the fate of her father, and was augmented by the necessity she was under, of appearing ignorant of it, her sister's letter enjoining her to the strictest secrecy on this score as much for their own and their father's sake, as for the sake of those who, by conniving to secure them the means of corresponding with the exterior, were placing their own life in jeopardy should the fact transpire and reach the ears of the Governor, or of the Lieutenant of Police. Still could she not stifle the impulse of her nature, and implored Ru to admit her to her father's cell, or to allow her father to come to her's. Ru promised to do it, but St. Leu's escape caused a stricter watchfulness to be exercised over the unfortunate inmates that remained, so that it became utterly impossible for the *porte-clefs* to carry out his humane intentions—if a promise to do a kindness for love of lucre only, might be called a humane intention.

Uncertain now as to her ultimate destiny, overwhelmed with grief at the melancholy position of her father, whom not even the sacrifice of her liberty had been able to save, looking forward to a change, from day to day, only to be daily disappointed, and from this state of suspense gathering the gloomiest forebodings, the poor girl's health began rapidly to decline, nor could the well-meant, though common-place condolences and comforting assurances of Sister Bridget succeed in raising her drooping spirits. It became too apparent to her that she and her father had fallen victims to the odious machinations of D'Argenson, whose name she had from childhood never heard without a shudder, so constantly had he been mixed up with the calamities that had within her recollection befallen her parent, and she sickened at the thought of their being perhaps doomed to pass the remainder of their days within those loathsome walls, without the possibility of exchanging one word of consolation, one kiss of affection, though so near to each other.

Her sister too! Was she fated no more to see *her*? no more to hear her endearing voice calling her by name? no more to feel her warm kiss upon her cheek? no more to ramble with her amongst the flowery meads of their native home? Were they then no more to live together? to smile together? to weep—to feel—to sympathize together, but thus, be suddenly cut off from that sweet interchange of thought and sisterly love that had hitherto been to them so replete with felicity? The thought was bitter in the extreme!

And her lover; her betrothed! Had she then heard his voice for the last time? Was it for the last time they had exchanged vows? Was that bright day-dream of bliss which had up to that time formed a part of her existence, and to the realization of which she had looked forward, as the consummation of her earthly happiness, was it to fade only *as* a dream and be numbered with the shadows of the past instead of shedding its refulgence upon the future? Was it indeed true that she should never see him more? *never? never? never?* The thought was maddening!

And must she bid adieu to the world? To the world so full of charms for her? To all that she loved dearest in it? She so young? Would the pure air of heaven never again fan her cheek? Nor her eyes again be gladdened by the sight of the transparent firmament with its golden orb by day, and its silver moon and spangled vault by night, and its azure sky, and fleecy clouds swift travelling on the wings of the wind? No spring? No summer? No autumn? No winter? No morn? No day? but night always? No green fields! No sweet-smelling flowers? No crystal streamlets? No birds twittering cheerfully on the dewy spray? No relative or friend to cheer her solitude? No hand of affection to smooth the pillow that supports her heated temples? No voice save her jailer's to respond to her dying call? Must all this come to pass? and she to foresee all and live? The thought was death!

Such was the tenor of her meditations daily, nightly, always; and thus she lived on between the alternations of hope and despondency, when one morning in the course of the week immediately after the occurrence of the events recounted in the last chapter, Ru suddenly entered her chamber, followed by D'Argenson.

The poor girl started, and shuddered on perceiving him, but as a gleam of hope shot through her brain she exclaimed:

"Ah, Monseigneur! You are come to release me!"

"Leave us," observed the Lieutenant of Police, turning abruptly round to Ru who stood in the door-way; the man nodded; "go thou!" continued D'Argenson, addressing Sister Bridget who had retreated, trembling, into a remote corner: the matron dropped him a low courtesy, and casting a furtive look of terror at him as she scurried past, and a glance of pity upon Julie, who was gazing at his dark countenance with mute amazement, she and the *porte-clefs* quitted the apartment together.

A few moments of silence ensued, when the Lieutenant of Police, pointing to the chair Julie had just vacated, and placing another near it, commanded her to "*be seated.*" The trembling girl obeyed; D'Argenson sat down opposite to her, staring intently at her, without speaking; over-come with confusion and shame she burst into tears, sobbing:

"Oh, Monseigneur! Pray do not look at me so!"

"Thou didst ask me just now, fair Julie," replied he and with strange emphasis, "if I came to liberate thee!"

Julie looked up.

"Well then, no!" continued the Lieutenant of Police; "'tis as well to tell thee so at once!"

The broken spirit of the girl was roused by this brutal announcement, and though she turned deadly pale, her eyes gleamed with suddenly kindled indignation as she proudly rejoined!

"And pray, Monseigneur, what is my crime, that I should be detained a prisoner here?"

"My hate," retorted he with frightful deliberation.

"Great God!" ejaculated she, starting up with terror as she heard this terrible revelation, and for the first time caught a glimpse of the horrid truth; "what have I done to merit such hate as your's?"

"'Tis not thou, girl," responded he, seizing her by the arm and forcing her to resume her seat, "that hast done nought to arouse my hatred; 'tis thy father! 'tis thy father's sister!"

"My poor aunt Constance!" mournfully exclaimed Julie, "whom my dear father so often speaks of! Ah, Monseigneur, can the dead not be forgiven?"

"Never!" muttered he; "never will I forgive her for scorning me, nor thy father for his insidious counsels to her I loved! But for him I might have been happy!"

"Monseigneur," observed the maiden, with great trepidation, "this is not a theme for my ears! I am no stranger to the unfortunate circumstance to which you allude, nor wish to dwell upon it! Yet, tell me, I implore you, why it should exercise so fatal an influence over my destiny, and that of our family?"

"Because," retorted he, with fearful energy, "my love turned to hate! Because, when Constance de St. Auney blighted my hopes, I swore by my patron, Saint Marc, that I would pursue relentlessly, and with unmitigated hatred, her and her's! That her enemies should be my friends, and her friends my enemies! Because I swore, that for counselling the act that destroyed my peace of mind, I would persecute thy father and his children even unto the grave! That I would not rest until I had seen him carried thither grey-haired with grief! That should his daughters love—ah, maiden, thou startest now—I would rob them of their heart's treasure, even as he was the means of robbing me of mine! Long did I wait for the day that should place him and his in my power! It has come, girl! Dost understand me?"

"No, Monseigneur, no! I do not understand you," gasped the affrighted girl, petrified with horror as she listened to this portentous confession, and suddenly beheld her worst fears verified; "I surely misconceive you! You cannot mean what you say! It is not possible you can be so wicked—so cruel—so uncharitable! Oh, Monseigneur! Pity, pity!" and clasping her hands she sobbed aloud.

"'Tis well," retorted he, nowise moved; "I see that thou dost understand! How like thou art to Constance! In thee I behold her,

suing me for pity! I answer *thee*, as I would answer her; *no pity!* I have abjured it!"

"And was it for this," sobbed Julie, "was it to make a mockery of my anguish that you came hither? To torture me by cruel taunts, and more cruel threats? Oh, what horrid, fearful reality is this? Why cannot I die to escape this everlasting solitude?"

"Thou can'st escape it without dying," muttered he, fixing his hyena-like eyes upon her till she quailed beneath the fixidity of his gaze; "the means are in thy power!"

"Speak, then, Monseigneur," quickly replied she, her heart suspicionless of guile; "there is no sacrifice I would not make to—" she was unable to complete the sentence, for suddenly recollecting herself the blood mantled to her cheeks, and she held her peace.

"Go on," ejaculated D'Argenson, exulting in prolonging her confusion:

"No, Monseigneur," she replied, after a brief pause, during which she partially recovered from her embarrassment; "'tis your turn to speak! You were about proposing conditions for my release!"

Without any attempt to disguise the nature of his propositions by a circumlocutory preamble, D'Argenson resumed:

"I once loved thy aunt Constance, but that love turned to hate! I have told thee how that from that hour I hated her and her's! But thou art like Constance, beautiful Julie, and though I hate thee, 'tis not on thine own account, but on account of thy father! As my love for Constance turned to hatred, so may my hatred of thee change one day to love, so thou wilt consent to give me love for hate till I return thee love for love!" and seizing her hand he held it firmly grasped within his own, pausing for her reply.

"I—I should have suspected this—" ejaculated she at last, in almost inaudible tones, and striving to release herself from his iron grasp; "but know, Monseigneur, that I prefer death to infamy such as this! If this dungeon is to be my only habitation until death, welcome *it*, but never—never will I consent to purchase my liberty at so odious a price! Loose me, Monseigneur, and be gone!"

D'Argenson loosed her hand, but compelled her to remain seated, for she had partly risen as she spoke, and whilst a hideous smile distorted his repulsive countenance, he replied:

"Thou art pronouncing judgment not upon thyself alone, fair girl, but upon thy father also! Know that he is again in my power! Know too that I hold His Majesty's warrant for his detention and thine, during the royal pleasure! And that without my intercession on behalf of thee and of him, perpetual imprisonment will be thy fate! Hearest thou that? *sang dieu!* What say'st thou now?"

"My father, Monseigneur," replied the maiden, sobbing, "would not accept liberty purchased by his child's dishonour."

"But the Count de St. Leu, girl! Ha, ha! I have thee there!"

"He has escaped, thank Heaven," ejaculated Julie.

"Yes! But it is only for a while," resumed the Lieutenant of

Police; "I am on his track, and he shall not, he cannot escape me!"

"But Monseigneur," asked the poor girl, choking with emotion; "what has Leon done? He is guiltless of crime, I will answer for him!"

"So thou say'st now!" answered he; "but so say not I! He raised his hand against his Highness the Duke of Chartres—not only to murder, but to rob him!"

"What malice!" exclaimed Julie, casting a look of profound contempt upon her persecutor.

"Malice!" retorted he, laughing scornfully: "*mort dieu!* Did not St. Marc see in his possession the very ring that he stole from His Highness?"

"'Tis false," exclaimed the maiden, looking proudly at D'Argenson; "His Highness stole the ring from Jeanne, but it was not St. Leu that attacked His Highness on the Pont-Neuf! Here is the proof!" and she held out her hand shewing the ring that St. Leu had restored to her.

"Ha!" gasped D'Argenson, taken by surprise. "By St. Marc, there is treason going on within! How knowest thou all this? And whence had'st thou that ring? speak!"

"There is no treason, Monseigneur," returned Julie, forgetting in her anxiety to save St. Leu, that she was compromising the friends who had served her; "there is only humanity. St. Leu obtained leave to see me in my cell, and restored me my ring which he received from the Sieur St. Marcel le Trouvè, his comrade!"

"This is a trick of thine, to screen thy lover," retorted the Lieutenant of Police, controlling his surprise on hearing St. Marcel's name mentioned, in connexion with the ring, but exulting at the prospect of having a crime to bring against him, and pretending to doubt the girl, in order to excite her to speak; "St. Leu was the offender, not St. Marcel!"

"St. Leu had it from St. Marcel's own lips, Monseigneur; it is the truth, believe me! Leon is innocent—indeed he is!"

"Let him prove *that*," rejoined D'Argenson; "'ere long he shall be an inmate of the Bertaudière, *then* let him prate of innocence as long as he chooses!"

"Oh, Monseigneur," exclaimed Julie, falling on her knees, and holding up her hands imploringly, whilst the tears rolled down her pale cheeks; "I do implore you, spare Leon! Indeed, indeed he is innocent! Spare *him*, Monseigneur, if you kill *me!*"

"I will spare him, girl, on one condition! From him transfer thy love to me, if it be only for one short week! The terms are easy! Decide!"

"Oh, Monseigneur, have you then no heart? Can you ask me this and not feel your cheek glow? I will give you *my* life—*my* liberty for *his*—but spare my honor, Monseigneur, I beseech you!"

"Your liberty I have already," retorted the Lieutenant of Police,

with a grim smile of exultation; your life I do not seek! You have heard my conditions! Your answer!"

For a few moments Julie was unable to reply for tears and sobs, but her indignation at last obtained the mastery over her emotion; by an extreme effort she recovered herself sufficiently to speak, and slowly rising from her suppliant posture, she stood erect before him and answered:

"And what would Leon say to me, if to save his life, I gave up that which to him and to me is even more precious than life! Shame, Monseigneur! Shame upon you for this infamy! I despise you—I scorn you—I loathe you! I sully my tongue to answer you! I am born of blood, Monseigneur, that never yet knew dishonor! I will not be the first to stain our name! I refuse your odious, your hateful terms! They could emanate only from so vile a thing as you"—and turning on her heel, she retreated to the other end of the apartment, leaving him seated in his chair.

Nowise abashed, however, D'Argenson burst out into a hideous, convulsive laugh that made Julie shudder, and he now followed her to the place where she stood: she shrunk from him, but he grasped her by the arm, and attempted to drag her into the middle of the chamber: the poor girl uttered a shriek of mingled fright and pain, saying:

"I beseech you—I implore you, Monseigneur, to leave me!"

"Fear nothing, girl," answered he; "I will offer thee no violence; thou art in my power, and cannot escape me! I can wait until solitude has cooled thy anger, and then we may better understand each other! Know this, however, I have been only mocking thee! Hadst thou consented to my propositions, it should neither have saved thy father, thy lover, nor thyself! But thou shalt be mine yet! Mark that; *mort dieu!*"

"Never, never, Monseigneur!" gasped Julie, covering her face with her hands.

"Wait!" retorted he. "But listen to me awhile! Thou dost remember seeing below, in the dungeon of the ditch, an old man!"

Julie shuddered;

D'Argenson continued.

"For five and twenty years he has inhabited no other dwelling! For five and twenty years he has not seen the light of day, nor has the air of heaven fanned his cheek! No voice has echoed to him save his own! His companions are loathsome reptiles that burrow in the straw that forms his couch! His drink is water—his food bread! Thou hast seen that old man! A quarter of a century ago, his eye was bright, his voice clear, his gait firm! his eye is now vacant! his voice gone! his limbs are paralyzed! Solitude and privations have driven him mad! Well! such a fate shall be thy lover's—such a fate thy father's!"

"Oh, horrible, horrible! Monstrous!" gasped the terror-stricken girl:

D'Argenson resumed:

"Thee I will keep too, in solitude similar to this, until thou can't no longer bear the burden of thine own thoughts! To escape them and be once more free, thou wilt at last grant to me that which thou dost now deny me! Thou wilt cast thy arms about my neck, even as thou dost around thy lover's, and wilt call me by his name! Thou wilt pine for my coming, as thou dost pine for him! Thou shalt remain here until that time comes, and when thou hast yielded thyself to me, I will restore thee to thy Leon, and to thy father! Thou shalt also find thy sister Jeanne there! Old as thou wilt be! Dishonoured too, even as thou wilt be! From being the mistress of a Prince, step by step she shall descend to the last degree of infamy, and then will *I* bring her to the arms of her doting father! All this will I do, for I hold you all in my power, and escape is impossible! When I have done, this my vengeance will be complete! But not till then!"

Julie had listened to D'Argenson with feelings it is impossible to describe. Terror, disgust, indignation, contempt, and solicitude for her father and for Leon, by turns struggled for the mastery, but as the Lieutenant of Police detailed the fearful catalogue of evils in store for them, she felt that there was indeed no escaping from their fate save by a special intervention of Providence.

"Great and merciful Father!" ejaculated she, appalled by the fearful threats of her persecutor; "is there no punishment for infamy like this? Preserve us from this monster, or we are lost indeed!"

How awful did the blasphemous chuckle sound that followed the poor girl's short but fervent prayer; she durst hardly look round, fearing to encounter in his stead some unholy being, so unearthly did it strike upon her ear; soon, however, she was recalled to full consciousness of the reality of his presence by his again addressing her.

"To-morrow," said he, striding up to her, "Sister Bridget shall leave thee! To-morrow, thy cell shall be cleared of every thing that it contains! Thou shalt have nothing to beguile the long hours, save thine own thoughts! No companion in thy solitude, not even a fly or a spider! Look around thee! Thou art in thy grave!"

Poor Julie's fortitude could not bear up against the frightful reality of the picture that D'Argenson had drawn, and sinking on her knees again as he turned away to leave her, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Monseigneur, I do implore you, for the love you say you once bore to my deceased relative, not to consign me thus to a living death! I am too young to suffer so much! oh, do hear me, Monseigneur! Spare us, for we have done you no harm! Spare us for mercy's sake! Do not call down upon your head the malediction of Heaven! Spare us, Monseigneur, and our everlasting prayers shall be for you."

D'Argenson looked for a moment at the beautiful suppliant that clung almost to his feet, but it was only to chuckle at her anguish: he frowned as he smiled, answering:

"I ask for no one's prayers! Thine to me are unavailing! I would not spare thee though it cost me my salvation! By St. Marc I would not! Thou shalt die here!" and with this he abruptly quitted the chamber.

"O God!" ejaculated Julie, as the iron-hearted man disappeared, and fell to the ground in a swoon.

CHAPTER L.

RU DEFEATS D'ARGENSON'S MEDITATED VILLAINY AGAINST JULIE.

The Lieutenant of Police had scarcely quitted the cell than Ru and Sister Bridget re-entered it, having been, during this interview, snugly ensconsed between the outer and the inner doors, so that not a word escaped them.

"I told thee so," said the *porte-clefs*, pointing to the prostrate girl, and hastening to assist Sister Bridget to raise her; "I knew he meant mischief!"

"Poor girl!" exclaimed Bridget, endeavouring to restore the maid by the application to her temples of a handkerchief steeped in cold water.

"I tell thee what, Bridget," observed Ru; "there's only one way of saving her!"

"How's that?" asked the dame.

"Why, she's sure to die if she stops here," resumed the *porte-clefs*; "isn't she?"

"Well!" observed the matron, dapping Julie's forehead.

"Well! I say it would be a charity to save her the trouble!" retorted the other meaningly.

"Antoine Ru," ejaculated Bridget, "thou could'st never have the heart to—"

"Bah!" retorted he; "How long is it since thou had'st one, eh? I can recollect the time when thou would'st no more have minded stifling a babe at the birth, than I should mind strangling Corbé! Thou must have had a good deal of heart *then*!"

Sister Bridget did not relish this mysterious allusion, but prudently held her peace, appearing to hear only a portion of what he was saying and redoubling her attention to Julie, who as yet gave no symptom of returning consciousness.

A short pause ensued, during which Ru filled a glass with water, and brought it to the matron.

"Here," said he, as he placed the glass in her hand; "'tis soon done, Bridget!"

"No, Ru, no!" remonstrated the matron; "I can't do it! indeed I can't!"

"Hold up the glass," continued he, taking out a small phial from his pocket, which he uncorked; "this is a safe dose! No smell!" and he emptied the contents of the phial into the glass.

"I think she is reviving," whispered Bridget.

"Give it to her then as she comes to," said Ru, in the same tone; "she won't suspect any thing!"

"I am afraid," answered the matron; "thou do it!"

"Fool," muttered Ru, between his teeth; "so that we save her from Monseigneur D'Argenson, does it matter by what means? Did I not promise Jacques I would do it only at the last extremity; and I think it has come to that! Besides, are we not to have a hundred louis? She can only die once after all!"

"Suppose we should be found out, Ru, we should be hanged!"

"The yarn's not spun yet that'll hang thee, or me either, Bridget! But, see; she moves!"

Julie now opened her eyes, and after a vacant stare around, shuddered, exclaiming in a faint voice:

'Where am I?'

"With Sister Bridget, and Ru, Mademoiselle," responded the matron.

"Oh, yes! I recollect now," observed Julie, sitting up; "where is that horrid—fearful man?"

"Gone!" replied Ru.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Julie; "oh, how ill I feel!"

"Take a drink of water, Mademoiselle," suggested the *porte-clefs*, winking to the matron; "Bridget, hand the glass to Mademoiselle!"

With trembling hand and anxious eye, Bridget did as she was bidden, turning deadly pale, as Julie unsuspectingly received the vessel, and drank off the whole of its contents, returning the glass to Ru.

For a few moments the unfortunate girl seemed to revive, and rose for the purpose of approaching nearer to the fire, when she staggered, and sunk back again into her chair:

"Oh, Bridget—Ru—" said she, "I—I am very ill! Great Heaven—what is this? How every thing turns round! Save me, Bridget! I—I am falling," and she clutched the chair with nervous energy, as though to save herself from being precipitated forwards; "I surely—cannot be—dying! And yet—this—darkness! Fetch my father—I beseech you! Let me—embrace him once! Oh, 'tis too late! I am going—Oh, Leon! Jeanne! Sister—dear sister! Father! —Leon—oh—"

All was over: the poor girl sunk back lifeless in the chair! Covering her face with her hands, Sister Bridget burst into tears: Ru looked at the now inanimate form before him, shook his head, lifted up his hands, and proceeded carefully to rinse the glass; this done, he stalked up to Sister Bridget, saying:

"Not a word now, Bridget, or—no money, and—" here he shook his huge fist at her in a menacing manner, nodding his head significantly, "I'll wait half an hour or so," continued he, "before I give the alarm. I'll say that after Monseigneur left her, we found her in a fit, and that she went off in one, eh?"

As this arrangement appeared perfectly satisfactory to the matron, Ru left her with this understanding, and in about half an hour made his report to the officer on duty, who apprized Monsieur Joncas, who in turn informed Corbé, and the latter communicated the intelligence to St. Marc.

The Governor immediately forwarded an official message to Monseigneur D'Argenson, which, however, he did not receive until night-fall, not having returned to his *bureau* until late. The news came upon him like a thunder-bolt, and he read the letter twice before he could credit the fatal truth. Perhaps he felt some compunction, for he was evidently the cause of the melancholy catastrophe. Whatever his feelings were, however, he said nothing, but, sitting down at his table, wrote back an answer to St. Marc, and despatched it forthwith.*

At about eleven o'clock that night, after the garrison of the Bastile had retired, and the watch had been set, Ru might have been seen making the best of his way towards the garden on the bastion; the sentinels on the round-away, to whom he was well known, allowed him to pass without questioning him; but one of them, more scrupulous than the rest, demanded whither he was going:

"I've lost the key of the little gate," responded he, very readily, "and I'm going to look for it."

"Oh!" said the sentinel," and permitted him to go on.

Ru reached the little gate in question, and pulling out from his pocket the key he pretended to have lost, stooped as though looking about for it on the ground, with a view the more completely to deceive the vigilant sentinel who had so recently questioned him: after a few moments spent thus, he watched an opportunity, when the man's back was towards him, to open the gate, and step through it into the garden on the bastion.

Proceeding boldly along, for there were no sentinels here, he reached the mamelon, and laying flat upon the ground, gave a low whistle, something resembling the *whoo whoo* of an owl; for a minute or so he waited, but receiving no reply, he repeated the signal; this time it was answered. Upon this the *porte-clefs* took

* The last Sacrament was always administered *at night*, or at night-fall, without regard to the condition of the moribond, who often died without receiving it, as the priest never came without being sent for, and was never sent for but at night. One of the *porte-clefs* fetched him from the Parochial Church (*St. Paul's*), and conducted him to the Bastile. His entry was made in strict silence, and if he bore the host, the whole of the garrison was placed under arms, and drawn up in a double line from the entrance-gate to the door of the dying man's cell. Only the priest and his *porte-dieu* entered the cell. When a prisoner died, the person who first discovered the fact—generally the *dorte-clefs*—informed the Major of the Château, or the King's Lieutenant, as he was more commonly styled; the Major informed the Lieutenant-Governor, who informed the Governor, and the latter, in turn, communicated the circumstance to the Lieutenant of Police, who then conferred with the King to know what should be done with the body, though generally, the Lieutenant of Police acted upon his own responsibility, and gave the necessary instructions. This routine was always gone through also, when a prisoner was ill and needed medical advice, so that many died before the permission could be obtained.

out from the pocket of his jerkin a small paper parcel, to which a long thin cord was attached, and began lowering it over into the great outer ditch, having first cast it adroitly over the *chevaux-de-frize*. A short interval elapsed, when the same low whistle was again heard: Ru then drew up his string, replaced it in his pocket, and wended his way back by the same way he had come.

On the following night, as the clock chimed the hour of nine, a funeral procession left the Bastile: it was composed of two priests, who walked first, then the body of Julie, borne by six soldiers of the garrison, then Ru and a man closely muffled up in a cloak, who had arrived at the Bastile about a quarter of an hour before, accompanied by the priests, It went slowly onwards until it reached the Church of St. Paul, where it was met by another priest, who was waiting at the gate of the cemetry to receive it, and who, as the mournful *cortège* entered the holy portal, fell in the last, carefully closing the door after him.

The body having been placed *on the ground* within the choir, the priests who had accompanied the procession from the Bastile, began to solemnize the ritual for the dead, and by taking up the responses from each other's mouth almost before they were uttered, and omitting to observe the stops, scrambled through the ceremony in an incomparably brief space of time. This done, Ru and the man in the cloak followed the two priests into the sacristy: here one of them took out a book from a closet, together with writing materials, and, seating himself at the table, made an entry.

"The name, Monseigneur?" said he, addressing the man in the cloak.

"Francoise Lemoine!" replied the latter.

"What age?" resumed the other.

"Seventeen!" was the brief response.*

The priest having concluded the entry, handed the pen to the man in the cloak, who signed his name at the bottom, as did Ru after him; the priests signed last, the book was restored to the chest, and the four returned to the church.

During this time the soldiers, directed by the third priest, had removed the coffin to the trap that opened into the vaults beneath; as the principal personages approached they commenced lowering it, two of them having gone below for the purpose of placing it out of the way. As this operation was being performed, the man in the cloak leaned over, and gazing at the coffin as it gradually disappeared, muttered, with a savage chuckle of fiendish satisfaction:

"One of them!"

This man was D'Argenson.

As soon as their task was accomplished, the soldiers came out of the vault, and the trap was carefully re-adjusted, the third priest

* No prisoner who died in the Bastile, was ever interred but under an assumed name. The Man with the Iron Mask was enregistered under the cognomen of "*Marchiali*," which forms the anagram "*Ci Amiral*." *Amiral* (Admiral) was the title always borne by the eldest son of the Kings of France.

The Church of St Paul la bastile.

fastening the same by means of a heavy padlock; the parties then quitted the church without exchanging another word—the soldiers and Ru returning to the Bastile, the priests to their respective domiciles, and D'Argenson to his hotel.

Julie de St. Auney was reckoned amongst the victims of the Bastile.

About half an hour after the departure of the above-mentioned personages, two men emerged from behind one of the large tombs that graced the cemetry attached to the Church, where they had lain quietly concealed up to this moment; one of these men carried a dark lantern concealed beneath his large cloak, the other a mattock, an iron-bar, and a huge bunch of keys of various kinds and dimensions. Advancing with cautious tread to one of the side-doors of the sacred edifice, the one who carried the keys commenced operations upon the lock, and after trying a long time in vain, at last succeeded in unfastening it. They then entered the church, closing the door after them, and proceeded straight to the trap communicating with the vaults. This also in turn yielded to the dexterity of the operator, who, aided by his companion, now removed the ponderous flap, and they both descended.

These men were Jacques and Democritus.

The vaults, which extended entirely under the church, were divided into *aislets* or galleries, having stone niches for the reception of coffins; many of these had crumbled partly away, leaving exposed the blanched remains of their occupants, whilst in one corner was a heap made up of human bones and skulls, iron-handles, rotten planks, old nails, screws, and pieces of stone that had fallen away from the walls, or been dislodged by fracture; near this heap, in a niche by itself, having been placed there previously to its interment in the cemetry, lay the body of Julie enclosed in a shell, without plate or any other mark to distinguish it, except that burnt into the wood were a number and the letter B.

"That is it," said Jacques, as the light of his lantern fell full upon it.

Democritus nodded, and taking from his pocket a clasp-knife, began to remove the screws; within half an hour he accomplished his task, and the rigid form of the poor girl was exposed to the anxious gaze of the spy.

With a tear standing in his eye, the latter gently raised the body, supporting it in his arms whilst his companion filled the coffin with rubbish taken from the heap already mentioned; this done, he adjusted the lid, and screwed it down again, taking care to clear away all traces of his operation: they then returned to the church, Democritus ascending first, for the purpose of lighting Jacques up the stairs; arrived here, the former having deposited his lantern on the ground, dropt the flap that covered the entrance to the vaults, and padlocked it as before, whilst the spy conveyed his burden into the cemetry, where he was soon re-joined by Democritus. Casting his cloak over the body, Jacques led the way across the cemetry to a small gate that opened into the Rue St. Paul, to open

which, by means of the false keys, was a matter of small difficulty though great risk, for fear of discovery by the patrol. However they accomplished their object without interruption; the philosopher re-locked the door, and they both sped as rapidly as they could to Lutetia.*

* The Church of St. Paul's mentioned above, though now no longer in existence, was of great antiquity; the remains of those who died in the Bastile were always interred here, hence it was sometimes called "*St. Paul la Bastile*;" and here all traces of these unfortunates were lost.

Saint Ouen, in his life of St. Eloi, says that the latter erected this building in the year 650; it was then only a small oratory, covered with "*lames de plomb*" (small pieces of lead), and stood in the middle of a cemetry destined to receive the bodies of "*three hundred nuns of the Abbaye of St. Martial*," which, in 632, he had founded in the Cité; but this Abbaye being annexed in 1107 to that of *St. Maur aux Fossés*, the cemetry and the oratory were likewise annexed to it.

In 1132 we find the first mention made of the Church of St. Paul as a parochial church, in a Bull of Pope Innocent the 2nd's; and Christine de Pisau, the fair historian of the 14th century, enumerating the edifices built by her royal patron Charles the 5th, speaks also of the restoration of this one by him:—"*Item L'Eglise de St. Paul, emprés son hostel, moult fit amender et accroistre.*" The alterations, however, were completed by Charles VII., and it formed for a long course of years the parochial church of the Hotel de St. Paul, and of the Palais des Tournelles, at that period the residences of the Kings of France.

The old Church of St. Paul's was demolished after the great revolution, and the parish annexed to the Church of St. Louis, built upon the foundation of the old walls and ditch that surrounded Paris; it was commenced in 1627 and completed in 1641, and was called the Church of the Jesuits; when these were expelled from France, in 1767, it was given to the Canons of the *Culture St. Catherine*, which was in turn suppressed in 1790. It is the third dependency of Notre Dame.

Charles the First, Dauphin of France, was baptized in the Church of St. Paul's, on the 3rd December 1368, and many celebrated personages were buried here, and in the cemetry; amongst others the following.

"*Nicolle Gille*," *(so writes Sauval)* who died on the 10th July 1503. He was the first author who wrote the *Annales de France*.

"*François Rabelais*," the poet and wit, who died on the 9th of April 1553.

The epitaph of this extraordinary individual, written by himself, is very characteristic.

"*Je n'ai rien vaillant*;"	"I have nothing worth;"
"*Je dois beaucoup*;"	"I owe much;"
"*Je donne le reste aux pauvres*;"	"I give the rest to the poor."

Also Jean Nicot, Maitre des Requêtes, Ambassador of France to the Court of Portugal, in 1559. He was the first who introduced tobacco in France, having brought back with him, and presented to Catherine de Medecis, "the famous Plante called Tobako." It was at first called *Nicotaine*, after him; then, "*l'herbe à la Reine*," (the Queen's herb) *because the Queen brought it into repute* throughout the kingdom.

In the month of June, 1790, were buried in the Cemetry, the bones of four persons found chained together in the dungeons of the Bastile. A monument was raised to their memory, bearing this inscription.

"*Sous les pierres mêmes des cachots où elles gémissaient vivantes, reposent en paix quatre victimes du despotisme. Leurs os, découverts et recueillis par leurs frères libres, ne se lèveront plus qu' au jour des Justices pour confondre leurs tyrans.*"

Beneath the very stones themselves of the dungeons wherein they groaned, living, repose in peace four victims of despotism. Their bones, discovered and collected by their free brethren, will not rise again until the day of Justice to confound their tyrants.

CHAPTER LI.

THE NOTARY'S CONFESSION. D'ARGENSON'S TREACHERY.

A WORD or two now concerning Etienne Quinault, the Notary of the *Rue vielle du Temple.*

From the day on which his crafty patron announced to him *the fact* of Chamillart having consented to his nomination to the important post of First Judge of the *Cour Royale*, the old man's thoughts became totally absorbed in the prospect of his approaching elevation, and he looked forward daily, almost hourly, to the arrival of the official mandate that was to place him in possession of this high office, devouring his spleen in secret as day after day waned without his ambitious hopes being fulfilled.

Rendered suspicious by continual disappointment, he at last ventured to wait upon D'Argenson in order to ascertain the cause of the delay; D'Argenson affected surprise at the same, and pleaded ignorance, recommending the postulant to patience; but as week succeeded week without further news from the Minister, Quinault repeated his visits, always to be dismissed with some specious, plausible reason, which if it did not entirely satisfy, served to reconcile him to the necessity of awaiting Chamillart's convenience; still the time passed on, and although nearly three months had now elapsed since the promise was first held out to him, the consummation of his wishes appeared as far distant as ever, and his mind began to entertain misgivings with regard to D'Argenson, against which he in vain sought to struggle.

One morning as he was seated in his *étude*, intent upon examining a heap of dusty papers that had not, apparently, seen the light for many years, the old porter brought him a large square letter, bearing the seal of the Minister.

How his heart leapt as he snatched the missive from the messenger's hands! How his small eyes glistened as they glanced at the superscription! He trembled so violently, that he could scarcely decipher his own name, though written legibly enough! His long expected nomination was then at last confirmed! D'Argenson had *not* deceived him! Behold him, Etienne Quinault, First Judge of the *Cour Royale!*

Gasping for breath, he sank into his seat, and tore open the letter. But what was in it that he turned so ghastly pale? that caused the cold sweat to stand out in large drops upon his brow? and tears —yes, tears—to roll down his shrivelled cheeks? He crumpled the missive up in his hand, and striking his forehead with his clenched fist, started up, and began pacing the chamber to and fro, but without uttering a word!

At last he stopped short, resumed his seat, and read the letter again; this done, he laid it upon the table, picked up the dusty papers that he had let fall when the messenger entered, and having examined them, deposited them by the side of the letter; he then selected a key from a bunch that he took from his desk, and proceeded to open a large closet in the wall; another key, a very small one, very rusty, and of a peculiar form, applied to a square flap, fitting closely into the wood-work, caused the same to fly open—disclosing a secret drawer, from which Quinault extracted another bundle of papers, as dusty as the former; he was on the point of re-locking the closet, when he heard the door of his *étude* open; turning quickly round he saw Jacques standing there.

When the notary caught sight of this mysterious individual, he was seized with a fit of trembling, as upon a former occasion, and his countenance underwent a frightful change; starting convulsively as though he beheld a spectre, he stood rooted to the spot, gazing with fearful intensity at the intruder, but with a vacancy that bordered on idiotism.

Jacques also fixed his eyes upon Quinault, with an expression of countenance difficult to pourtray; he was pale, and his features were painfully contracted; he trembled too, being evidently under the influence of some all-powerful emotion which he strove to overcome. After a very brief pause, and without a word escaping the lips of either, he advanced towards the notary.

"What dost thou want of me?" stammered the old man, as the spy strided across the room; "I have never harmed *thee?*"

"Sit down," replied Jacques, incisively, seating himself at the same time.

Quinault obeyed.

"Look at me, now," continued his visiter; "look at me steadfastly!"

The notary attempted to keep his eyes fixed upon the speaker, but hardly succeeded; the effort was painful, and seemed to conjure up some terrible reminiscence; still, he *did* look at him for a moment, but instantly averted his gaze, directing it to the ground.

"Well," observed the spy; "thou hast seen me before!"

"I have," replied Quinault; "was it not thou who didst rob me of a hundred thousand crowns? Thy name is Jacques! Thou wert, not long since, in the pay of Monseigneur D'Argenson; thou wert his confidential agent! What wantest thou of me?"

"A word or two of truth, Maitre Quinault!"

"Speak!" replied Quinault, gradually regaining courage; "but tell me, dost thou come as a friend?"

"I will give thee a word of advice," answered Jacques, "which a foe would keep from thee. Beware of D'Argenson, for he is deceiving thee!"

"By Heaven I thought so!" ejaculated the notary, casting his eyes upon the letter he had just received; "but how knowest thou this?"

"I do know it," observed the spy; "would'st thou have proof of the fact?"

"Yes! yes! Give me proof!" cried Quinault, with painful earnestness of manner.

"Ere long," resumed Jacques, "thou wilt receive a letter from Monsieur de Chamillart, announcing His Majesty's refusal to sanction thy nomination to the post of First Judge of the *Cour Royale!*"

"'Tis here!" muttered the astounded notary in a scarcely audible voice; "it arrived scarcely half an hour ago! Thou hast told me truth indeed! Tell me now if 'tis to DArgenson's treachery I am indebted for this!"

"It is, Sieur Notary! The very day after thou didst betray me to him—I speak of the affair of the bond—thy *friend*, thy *patron*, the Lieutenant of Police, sent an anonymous letter to Monsieur de Chamillart, denouncing thee guilty of forging a will in thine own favour, purporting to be signed by thy late employer! Ha! Thou mayst well change colour! But did not I forewarn thee there would be hanging at the *Grève* if thou didst but breathe my name to him!"

"The traitor!" gasped Quinault, trembling from head to foot with rage; "and I to let myself be so duped! I am lost!"

"Answer my questions truthfully," resumed Jacques, "and I may perhaps save thee from the fate that impends over thee!"

"Say on, then, mysterious man," answered the hoary culprit; "and before Heaven I swear to speak the truth! I will not die on a gibbet! I will live for revenge! One crime more or less, what will it signify added to the long catalogue I have already committed! Oh, that I had known of this before! But it is not too late even now! I will have revenge yet!"

"Peace!" cried Jacques; "with one foot in the grave, 'tis not a time to be brooding over plans of vengeance! Live if thou wilt, but let it be for repentance!"

"No! no! for revenge!" reiterated Quinault, clenching his hand and striking his breast; "'tis here; it burns! Repent I cannot! It is too late! I will have revenge! But speak, thou! Why camest thou hither?"

"Thou knewest the late Count de St. Angin," resumed Jacques, after a pause, and looking fixedly at the notary.

"Name him not," stammered the latter, again turning cadaverously pale; "I beseech thee name him not!" and covering his face with his hands, he sobbed convulsively.

"As thou wilt," said the spy, somewhat astounded at his agitation; "'tis only of his son I would speak at present!"

"Of his son!" exclaimed Quinault; "but go on! I listen!"

"It is now rather more than twenty-one years ago," resumed Jacques, "that Monseigneur D'Argenson wrote to thee requesting thou would'st keep thine eye upon one Gertrude Leroux, a midwife, who was to take charge of a male child that he intended to send to Paris from Tours."

"True," observed the notary; "she was then living in the Rue St. Antoine!"

"What became of her?" asked Jacques.

"She remained in the same domicile for nearly eleven years after

that;" replied Quinault; "until D'Argenson came to reside in Paris! Shortly after his arrival she disappeared!"

"I know *that*! But where did she go! What became of her?"

"D'Argenson," resumed Quinault, "feared the woman, though I never knew why! To get rid of her, he caused her to be incarcerated in the Bastile! She is still there! After she had disappeared, reports were circulated that she had killed her husband, because he was found dead in his bed on the very same morning! But I always had my suspicions."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed the spy; "I have a clue at last! But there is yet another point, Sieur Quinault, on which thou must satisfy me! By certain letters which only very lately came into my possession, I have learnt that thy late master was the deceased Count de St. Angin's notary! When thou didst come into his business, the management of the Count's affairs necessarily fell into thy hands."

Frightful was the expression of Quinault's face whilst the spy adverted to these circumstances, who perceiving his agitation stopped short, gazing earnestly at the old man as he sat trembling in his chair.

"Go on!" muttered he, at length, in a scarcely audible tone of voice, and making a sign to the speaker with his hand.

Jacques resumed:

"After the death of his Countess, the Baron de St. Auney's sister, the Count de St. Angin left the *château* of his ancestors, for Paris, intending to travel until his grief had subsided! He was accompanied by a trusty servant; they both died of the epidemic then raging in this city! Tell me now where they were buried!"

The spy's voice became troubled as he spoke, and a tear stood in his eye; the emotion, however, was only momentary; he passed his hand across his brow, and looked at the notary in anticipation of his answer.

But if Quinault's countenance changed when Jacques first mentioned the Count's name, it was now perfectly appalling; his colour, naturally yellow, turned livid as that of a corpse; his eyes were glazed and fixed in their sockets, glaring with fearful immobility upon the speaker; the perspiration oozing from every pore, stood out upon his bald head, and upon his face, and rolled in streamlets down his hollow, withered cheeks; his thin lips were blue, and contracted as if by some severe spasmodic affection; his entire frame shook, his breast heaving convulsively and by starts, he remaining unable to utter a syllable.

Jacques could not see him thus without manifesting surprise, but in an instant, as if some sudden thought had flashed across his brain, his own countenance underwent a perceptible change, and starting up, he exclaimed:

"Speak, man; speak! What means this frightful silence? this fearful agitation? Has there been foul work? Answer me, or by Heaven I will find a way to make thee!"

"Mercy! mercy!" ejaculated the old man, gasping as he spoke; "I will confess all, but do not harm me! I am very old—"

"Confess then," shouted Jacques, now a prey to the most painful anxiety; "thou didst not murder them?"

"Mercy! mercy!" faltered Quinault.

"Monster! speak!" shouted Jacques; "his faithful servant! Thou didst not kill *him?*"

"For aught I know to the contrary he yet lives," replied the old notary.

"Lives, sayst thou?" exclaimed the spy, with a shout of joy; "oh! repeat those words! and I will bless thee yet!"

"Be calm, then," resumed Quinault, making a violent effort to appear so himself; "hear me to the end; I will tell thee all!"

"There," said Jacques, abruptly, reseating himself, and restraining his feelings as well as he was able. "I *am* calm! But be brief! Thy life hangs upon a thread!"

The old man paused a moment as if to collect his ideas, and began:

"As regards myself, I am guilty of the crime D'Argenson accuses me of! I *did* forge my employer's name to a will that I drew up in my own favour; D'Argenson discovered the cheat and taxed me with it; I was too young in crime and dissimulation to deny the fact, and acknowledged my offence: I preferred his protection and his friendship with all the evils they entailed, to the gibbet, and became his tool, his instrument! Cursed be the day on which I saw him first!"

"To the point! to the point!" exclaimed the spy.

Quinault continued:

"About a fortnight before the Count de St. Angin came to Paris, I received a letter from D'Argenson; I have it still in my possession. One moment; I will get it."

Selecting a letter from the bundle of dusty papers he had taken out of the secret drawer already mentioned, he placed it in Jacques' hands, saying:

"Read! Read aloud!"

The spy took the epistle, and after looking at the superscription which was, "*To the Sieur Etienne Quinault, Public Notary, Successor to Paul Jardine, Rue vielle du Temple, Paris,*" opened it, and read it aloud: it ran thus, and was written in a firm hand:

* * * * * * *

"*Nantes, this 25th day of July,* 1675.

"*Sieur Quinault,*

"*Thou knowest the high opinion I entertain of thee, and the great value I set upon thy friendship; also how I can reward those who serve me, or lose those who offend. Mark me.*

"*Within a fortnight from this time, the Count de St. Angin purposes to leave this city for Paris, on his way to Switzerland viâ Besançon. He has lost his wife, and intends to travel to dispel his grief, which is so intense,* REPORT SAYS IT WILL BE THE DEATH OF HIM.

"*Know, friend Etienne, that I mortally hate this man; why, is my business. If he were to die very suddenly at Paris, I should rejoice. This*

is not unlikely. The fever rages in the capital; suppose he were to catch it; eh? Dost understand me? Whatever papers he may bring with him, thou must secure.

"The Count will be accompanied by one domestic only, to whom he is much attached. He too must be disposed of——"

At this part of the letter Jacques became so violently agitated, he was obliged to pause; he looked at Quinault horror-stricken: the latter hung down his head, burying his face in his hands:

"Oh, monsters of iniquity!" ejaculated the spy.

"Go on!" gasped the notary.

The spy resumed:

* * * * * *

"—must be disposed of, if he prove troublesome: but leave him to me. I shall arrive at Paris on the same day as the Count, for I shall follow him secretly. I wish to be near thee lest thou shouldst commit thyself. I send thee this letter that thou may'st be prepared.

"A word in conclusion. Remember that thy life is in my hands. Refuse my request, I will hang thee. Assist me, I am ever thine.

Marc Réné Chevalier d'Argenson.

"If thou shouldst not answer this letter, I shall consider the affair as agreed upon between us."

* * * * *

"And what didst *thou* do, wretch," demanded Jacques, breathless from excitement.

"I was afraid to hang," muttered Quinault, not daring to look up, "and did *not* reply to the letter?"

The spy wiped the perspiration from his brow, and making a powerful effort to overcome his emotion, bade Quinault to continue.

"The Count de St. Angin," resumed the notary," arrived in this city accompanied by his servant, within the time stated by D'Argenson in his letter. D'Argenson himself came to me in the evening, and we arranged together what we should do. Two days after, on the 9th of August,—oh, fatal day!—the Count called upon me for the purpose of asking my opinion respecting the validity of a will he had himself drawn up before he left La Gâcherie and which I understood him to say he had brought, as also to settle his affairs before he proceeded further on his journey. As it was not convenient for me to attend to him then, I pleaded urgent business, and appointed that evening to see him; with this understanding he left. As soon as he was gone, I went to D'Argenson, and told him what I had done. He agreed to come to me at eight o'clock; half-past eight was the time I had fixed to meet the Count."

"Well! well!" observed Jacques, impatiently, perceiving that the notary paused.

"Well," continued the latter, "they both came. The Count submitted the will to my perusal. By it, he bequeathed the bulk of his property to his son, constituting the Baron de St. Auney, the boy's uncle, his guardian, who, in the event of the heir's decease was to inherit the property, with entail upon his children. This latter clause

was appended to the will in the form of a codicil. We conversed awhile upon these topics, and as the weather was excessively sultry I offered to the Count a glass of wine and water. He accepted, and I stept into the other room to prepare it for him. D'Argenson was there. He had brought with him a small phial which he handed to me. It contained a subtle poison. He held the glass whilst I poured into it about a dozen drops of the drug. The wine effervesced for a moment, and turned whiter, but almost instantly resumed its original colour. 'Fear nothing, friend Quinault,' said he to me, 'it is certain in its effects, and leaves no trace! No foolish scruples of conscience; thy life depends upon thy courage.' Nerving myself to accomplish the hideous task, I returned to the Count. Would that I had drunk that fatal draught myself, as I was tempted: but it was not to be; I was too cowardly. The unfortunate nobleman unsuspectingly took the glass, and wishing me health and prosperity, drank off its contents to the very dregs. He must have noticed my agitation, for his eyes were fixed upon me; I fancied with suspicion. D'Argenson, impatient to witness the effect of the potion, had followed me to the door, and was watching me the whole time. As the Count fell back in his chair, he rushed out. The dying man caught sight of him, and shuddered. He never spoke again."

Whilst Quinault detailed the circumstances of this cold-blooded crime, his features, as indeed his entire frame, were powerfully convulsed; in fact his whole appearance was perfectly unearthly. Jacques also was painfully excited, but still maintained a forced calmness of demeanour which offered a striking contrast to the agitation of his hoary companion:

"Just God!" ejaculated he, as the latter paused to recover himself; "can men prosper who are guilty of such crimes? But go on with thy tale of blood; I will hear it to the end!"

The notary resumed:

"D'Argenson had maturely considered his plans, and taken every precaution to baffle discovery, and even to evade suspicion. The dose I had administered was certain death, within a given number of hours. The Count writhed awhile in fearful agony, but remained unconscious of every thing. D'Argenson despatched me to fetch a neighbouring apothecary, who, puzzled by the extraordinary symptoms that had manifested themselves, and not knowing to what cause he should ascribe them, in his ignorance declared, upon an indirect suggestion of D'Argenson's, that the sufferer had been attacked by the epidemic. This sufficed to put every body to flight, and as the apothecary declared the case to be hopeless, we were left alone with the dying man, who expired within three hours after."

"Fearful!" exclaimed the spy.

"A few minutes before he died," continued Quinault, upon whose memory the minutest detail of this horrid tragedy appeared indelibly impressed, "his servant, alarmed at his master's protracted absence, and knowing where he was, came to fetch him; it was nearly one o'clock! Never shall I forget his despair when he beheld the Count in the

agonies of death! He vowed that his master was poisoned, and that the body should be examined by competent authority. Indeed the case was black enough. I could not dissimulate the terror I experienced, when he boldly charged us with the crime; but D'Argenson remained undaunted. We passed the night with the body, the faithful domestic weeping like a child. Early next morning, D'Argenson went out; he remained absent until noon. Meanwhile, the Count's servant summoned the resident *Juge de Paix* to examine the body, but the apothecary's declaration was considered satisfactory regarding the cause of death, and in the evening the corpse was buried in the Church of St. Paul's, the servant following it to the grave. Notwithstanding what had passed in the morning, however, he openly declared his suspicions that his master had come unfairly by his death. D'Argenson was with me at the time, in this very room, and whilst the man reiterated his charge against us, laughed in his face. That same night he disappeared!"

"This is too much," cried the spy, starting from his seat and clutching Quinault by the throat; "I can bear this no longer. Wretch! Monster! Assassin! That man was my father! Speak! Tell me what became of him, or by the Great God of Heaven, I swear I will with these hands drag thee to the gibbet foot, and hang thee! Speak! Speak I say!"

"Loo—se my throat," gasped the hoary wretch, writhing in the spy's iron grasp.

"There, then;" retorted Jacques, releasing him a little, "now; out with it! What became of my father!"

"The—the Bastile—" exclaimed the other, struggling.

"Great Heaven!" ejaculated the spy; "and he lives say'st thou!"

"He was alive three months ago!" answered Quinault.

Jacques' passions were roused almost to frenzy by this terrible revelation: his father's sufferings during a quarter of a century passed in solitude, came home to him all at once, compressed within the space of one brief moment of time, accumulated in one dark picture that he took in at a glance: fearful were the workings of his fine countenance as he struggled against the violence of the conflicting emotions to which his bosom was a prey, but his anger at last burst forth in spite of him, and clutching the criminal now prostrate at his feet, still more tightly by the throat, until the wretch's face grew livid and his eyes were well-nigh starting from their sunken orbits, he overwhelmed him with a torrent of maledictory epithets, and at length lifting him bodily up from the ground, dashed him down again with tremendous force, and sinking into a chair covered his face with his hands sobbing aloud:

"My father! My poor old father!"

A pause of some minutes, an awful pause, followed this act, and the spy would probably not have broken it for some time longer, had he not been startled by a something that touched his knees; it was Quinault, who recovering from the stunning shock he had received, had crept up to Jacques, and was now looking up in his face with an

expression of the most abject misery. The latter shrunk from contact with the wretch, who, terrified by the expression of his face, and fearing the consequences of a second outbreak of his wrath, clasped his hands imploringly together, muttering in a husky voice:

"No! no! Don't kill me! I am old—very old—"

"Old as thou art," cried Jacques, "thou can'st yet sin! I have even a mind to save the gibbet a disgrace! I know not what restrains my hand—"

"Mercy! Mercy!" gasped Quinault, clinging still more tightly to the spy's knees, and crouching to avoid the blow with which he was menaced; "my life is not worth taking! What advantage would it be to you to kill me! Spare me, I implore you! I am afraid to die! You shall have gold, as much as you like, if you will spare my life! I will give you the key of that room, there! It contains chests full of gold, concealed in the walls! Piles upon piles! All my savings! my hard earned savings! 'Tis all I possess! I will show you the secret of the panel! You shall have all—every livre—but spare my life! Don't murder me!"

"Coward! Despicable coward! Mean, grovelling, cringing worm!" answered Jacques, spurning him with his foot; "I *will* spare thy worthless life; for thou art indeed beneath my vengeance! I leave thee to the justice of Him above!"

"You—you are not deceiving me?" whined the notary with suddenly renewed animation; grasping at the slender thread on which his miserable existence seemed to depend; "do you really mean that you forgive me? that you will not seek my life?"

"I do!" retorted Jacques, repelling his approaches; "I will not have thy blood upon my head!"

"Hide me somewhere," continued the other in a half whisper; "I am afraid of D'Argenson! He will drag me hence to the Bastile, and from there to the gibbet! You shall have all that gold if you—"

"Peace! miscreant!" exclaimed the enraged spy; "thy gold is stained with blood! I will not betray thy terrible secret, but I will not stir a step to save thee from thy fate! Thou can'st not escape it!"

"Ha! Say you so!" ejaculated Quinault, with a fixed stare; "then my presentiments of impending evil have not deceived me! D'Argenson has betrayed me, at last! I feared him not then without cause! But if I fall, so too shall he! I will be even with him yet! Here; here are all the papers that the Count de St. Angin brought with him to Paris;" continued he, handing to the spy the packet of dusty papers which he had abstracted from the closet; "they have never been out of my possession one single day. These letters too, and this one which thou hast read; take *them*! D'Argenson often wanted them back, but I would not give them up! Here! this parchment contains a full confession of that fearful transaction, and is signed by me! I lived in dread of him, and drew it up, years ago, as much to ease my conscience as to be revenged upon him in the event of his betraying me! Half as much evidence would hang any other man! This, the third

part of a gold coin, I found suspended about the Count de St. Angin's neck."

Jacques' eyes glistened as he took the fraction of the coin, but he said nothing; Quinault observed him not, and went on:

"I don't know to what it relates, but take it, nevertheless. And now about his heir—the young Count! Is he alive? Was that bond a forgery?"

"No!" replied Jacques exultingly; "I was all along nearly sure of his identity, but durst not compromise myself! He signed the bond without knowing that he was appending his own name to it!"

"Let him keep out of the way, Sieur Jacques! D'Argenson has a clue to him, and is determined to—"

"He is out of D'Argenson's power," said the spy, interrupting him; "until within the last few days, I had no positive clue to his identity; but now I have! This piece of gold corresponds with a second that I lately got from La Gâcherie, together with a memorandum, stating that the third counterpart was placed around the boy's neck a few days after he was born! It is the custom in our part of the country! This fraction must be found, and then the chain of evidence will be complete! But in placing these papers in my hands, thou art furnishing evidence against thyself!"

"You must promise to make no use of such as may incriminate me," observed the notary in reply, "unless D'Argenson seek to lose me entirely. In that case, I shall be content to die, so I am sure he will grace the gibbet! Promise!"

"I do!" replied Jacques. "But I have another question to ask thee! Hast thou the Baron's bonds and his receipt for the sixty-five thousand crowns he owed to D'Argenson?"

"No, Sieur Jacques! D'Argenson keeps *them*! He has them constantly about his person!"

"And the Sieur de St. Angin's bond!"

"He has that also! But put up those papers, Sieur Jacques! They are hateful to my sight! Would that I had never seen them!"

Jacques concealed the whole of the precious documents beneath his vest, turning over in his mind the various startling facts which the notary had divulged, and pondering deeply upon the melancholy fate of his father whose release he knew not how to accomplish:

"I must see D'Argenson at all risks," said he, half aloud; "my father shall not remain longer deprived of liberty! God grant he may be still alive."

Quinault was on the point of making some suggestion, when he started very suddenly, for the tramp of soldiers in the court-yard became audible. Jacques also heard their footsteps, and looked out of the grated window to see what it was.

"'Tis D'Argenson," exclaimed he, with some trepidation; "can he have tracked me hither? Or comes he for thee, Sieur Quinault?"

The notary trembled violently, his countenance changing to a deathly hue, but he answered not, looking vacantly about in the greatest terror.

"Thou must conceal me somewhere," resumed Jacques, in a whisper; "to attempt escaping would be madness; besides, flight is impossible!"

"What—what shall I do?" ejaculated Quinault quite bewildered; "they are coming up the stairs!"

"Fool!" retorted the spy; "where's the key of yon' room? Quick!"

But the old man had lost all presence of mind, and fumbled in vain after the key. The moment was critical, for the footsteps were rapidly ascending the stairs; some of the men had in fact reached the landing. Quinault heard them, but unable to speak or to find the missing key, pointed energetically to the closet in the wainscot, the door of which he had left half open; Jacques was not slow to take advantage of the hint, and made a precipitate retreat into the hiding-place indicated, pulling the doors to upon him: these were scarcely closed than D'Argenson entered the office: he was unaccompanied.

CHAPTER LII.

IN WHICH THE NOTARY GIVES D'ARGENSON THE BENEFIT OF AN ACT OF CONSCIENCE.

QUINAULT'S embarrassment on seeing him was so manifest that the Lieutenant of Police could not fail observing it, but attributing it to the surprise occasioned by his unexpected arrival with the soldiery, not less than to the effect the letter he knew him to have that morning received from Chamillart must have produced, he feigned not to remark it; casting about him a rapid glance replete with sinister meaning, he advanced towards the notary, and raising his hand to his beaver, bade him "*a good morning.*"

Quinault did not move, nor speak.

"I have an unpleasant duty to perform, friend Quinault," remarked D'Argenson, allowing himself to drop into the easy-chair which the individual whom he was addressing usually occupied.

Still the notary answered nothing, but stood gazing at the speaker with a vacant, stupified air.

"I am come to arrest thee," continued the Lieutenant of Police; "here; here is a *lettre-de-cachet* against thee!" so saying, he took out a scrip of paper, and unfolding it, held it up so that the notary might take cognizance of its contents.

This announcement caused Quinault to shudder, suddenly rousing him from his lethargy; he snatched the fatal warrant out of D'Argenson's hands, and having glanced his eye over it, crumpled it up in an access of rage.

"Traitor!" ejaculated he, casting it with violence into his enemy's face.

The Lieutenant of Police was somewhat prepared for this explosion, as for the epithet that accompanied it, though he did not suspect that his victim *could* have become acquainted with his treachery towards him otherwise than by his inferring the fact from the receipt of Chamillart's letter; the first moment of surprise passed, however, he coolly picked up the *lettre-de-cachet*, and un-crumpling it, re-folded it and conveyed it into his pocket: by this time he had re-gained his equanimity, though his face was slightly flushed, and with a smoothness of manner not habitual to him, and a well-feigned look of commiseration, he said:

"Friend Quinault, thou accusest me wrongfully; I am no traitor!"

"Traitor! I say it again," cried the notary, advancing, and threatening the Lieutenant of Police with his clenched fist; "thou hast betrayed me!"

"And who told thee so?" inquired the latter with an air of not caring whether the other answered his question or not.

"Who? That letter from Chamillart!" retorted the notary, pointing to the missive that still lay open on the table; "the king has refused to ratify my nomination! I have been denounced guilty of forgery! A crime only *thou*, besides myself, did'st know I had committed—and that only *thou* could'st have divulged! Yes! Traitor! Cheat! *Thou*—thou hast deceived—ruined—lost me!"

D'Argenson allowed Quinault to continue to vent his rage in words, without attempting to stop him; when he came to an end, of his own accord, he said, with the most consummate self-possession, and a superbly hypocritical air:

"A letter from Chamillart! Thou surprisest me!"

"Read! Read and judge!" exclaimed the notary, pointing to the letter again.

The Lieutenant of Police took up the epistle:

"*Sieur Quinault,*" said he, reading half aloud, "*In consequence of certain information having reached us compromising your honour and integrity as a Public Notary of this city—*"

"*Certain information!*" ejaculated the accused; "mark that!"

Taking no notice of the interruption, D'Argenson continued:

"*And furthermore, of your being guilty of crimes entailing the severest penalty which the law adjudges against such, We, His Most Christian Majesty's Minister of State, do by these presents inform you that you are from this day suspended from your public charge, and that a severe inquiry will forthwith be instituted, in order to ascertain how far you may be innocent of the accusations alleged against you. We do, moreover, inform you, that we considered the said accusations sufficiently substantiated upon the evidence in our possession, to justify us in advising His Most Chris-*

tian Majesty to refuse to sanction your nomination to the post of First Judge of the Cour Royale. You will within twenty-four hours after receipt of this, surrender your person into the custody of our Lieutenant of Police.

MICHEL DE CHAMILLART.

MINISTER OF STATE"

* * * * * * * *

"There!" exclaimed Quinault; "what say'st thou now?"

"That this contains no accusation of forgery," responded D'Argenson, re-placing the letter upon the table; "how then can'st thou imagine that *I* have betrayed thy secret?"

"Because no other living witness, save thyself, knew it! Because, if I *have* been culpable of usury, and extortion, and other dishonesties —and I do not deny them to thee—I say that though guilty of these offences, I took my measures to evade conviction in the event of a discovery! Hence, 'tis not for *these* I fear inquiry! That I can baffle, however strict! But—but these *crimes*, Sieur D'Argenson—punishable by death—what are they, if not the crime of forgery and—and—"

"Murder!" quietly suggested the other.

"Yes, then! Murder, since thou wilt have it so!" resumed Quinault. "But at whose instigation? at whose *bidding?* for whose profit? For thine, or for mine?"

"Be calm! Be rational!" remarked D'Argenson; "there are listeners outside! Thou art compromising thyself! I am innocent —entirely innocent of denouncing thee! Thou hast some secret enemy, friend Quinault, who has obtained possession of thy secret, and divulged it! Besides, the eye and the justice of Heaven are infallible."

"Pah!" exclaimed the notary; and in a fit of rage excited by his patron's fiendish hypocrisy and blasphemous invocation, he spat in his face.

D'Argenson took out his pocket-handkerchief, and deliberately removed the nuisance from his visage, without betraying the slightest mark of ire, save that his brows were slightly convulsed.

"Friend Quinault," remarked he, returning his handkerchief into his pocket; "thou art in error! I would that the painful duty of arresting thee had devolved upon one less thy friend than I am! My duty, however, I must perform! Still, I have it in my power to assist thee!"

"Yes! To the gallows!" sharply rejoined the notary.

"To the means of escape," resumed D'Argenson speaking in a lower key.

The notary smiled incredulously; the former continued:

"Thou knowest that St. Marc is devoted to me, or, which amounts to the same, that if I command him to do my will, he has no power to oppose it! Listen now! For form's sake, it is necessary that I convey thee to thy prison, where, I promise thee, thou shalt not remain an hour longer than the termination of this inquiry! The parties who will have the conducting of it are all my subordinates Dost thou not perceive that for my own safety's sake—nay, for the

sake of my reputation, my honour—I could not allow a discovery to take place! Besides, there are no witnesses! The only witness is in the Bastile, and might die even this night! Nay, if necessary to our security, he shall die!"

Had D'Argenson not been intent upon developing his hellish scheme to Quinault, he would at this moment have seen two large, black eyes glaring fiercely at him from between the now scarcely half-closed doors of the closet near which he was sitting; he was however, so absorbed in his subject, that the circumstance escaped him, and after appearing there only a moment, the eyes disappeared, the doors of the recess having been once more pulled to.

"I say thus much, friend Quinault," continued he, "presuming upon thy conviction of our secret having transpired, though I would stake my life that the contrary is the fact! But should it be as thou suspectest, and danger menace thee, will it not also peril me? Is not this sufficient proof that I could not betray thee!"

"No!" muttered the notary; "*thou* art beyond the reach of the law! Thy plans were too deeply laid to incriminate *thee!* The poison thou didst bring thyself, on that fatal night; but didst thou not bid me keep what remained of it by me, *in case of need*! The phial is here still, and would be a damning proof against me though thou art guilty! Again, didst thou not leave Nantes in secret, and return thither in secret, so that no-body, save thy servant, *who is dead*, even suspected thy absence! How then can I prove thou wert here at Paris with me at the time? Besides, didst thou not bid me write to thee at Tours, whither thou didst go on thy return, so that the letter bearing intelligence of the Count's death should reach thee there, in order to prove that until then thou wert in ignorance of the event? Oh, no! The proofs are strong that thou hast betrayed me; but by Heaven, I have it still in my power to———"

"Stay! friend Quinault; stay!" interrupted the Lieutenant of Police; "hear me to the end! Supposing even that *this* crime *were* brought home to *thee* only, which according to thine own shewing I do now confess it must be, should that transaction have transpired: can I not set thee free? Aye, and I promise to do so, and to provide for thy ultimate safety! St. Marc will not dare refuse to do my bidding! Hence thou mayst banish thy fears upon this ground! As for the forgery of thy master's will, no one save myself, can prove thee guilty of it! Is it not sufficient that I pledge myself not to divulge my knowledge? And if thou art accused of other offences, committed during thy public career, can I not likewise befriend thee, and with thy assistance, prove thee innocent? Come, friend Quinault; matters are not so bad as thou didst imagine!

"I confess it," observed Quinault, with a peculiar chuckle; "they are worse! But to what purpose tends this long preamble of words, and of promises thou never intendest to keep? Suppose I believe thee sincere! that I believe thou wilt, when I am once in the Bastile, liberate me to be again a living terror to thee—for thou fearest me somewhat, Sieur Lieutenant—what service dost thou require at my

hands, in return for so signal a proof of thy protecting power?—I know thee too well to imagine thou wouldst do all this for nothing—speak!"

D'Argenson bit his lip, but calmly replied:

"Again thou wrongest me, friend Quinault! I seek no recompense! I seek only to serve *thee*; for I am, as thou truly sayst, beyond the reach of the law! Yet, if thou wouldst have me aid thee, thou must assist me, or the consequences may prove fatal!"

"Thou didst never use to be so long coming to the point, Sieur D'Argenson, when to gain me over to any purpose of thine, threats were needed! Charity maketh thee timorous! In what manner can I, to save my own neck, assist thee to ensure thine own, or place it in danger? Do speak, for I grow impatient."

D'Argenson gazed in astonishment at the notary's altered manner; his countenance was now flushed, his eyes were bright, and seemed to stand out from their orbits; he sat, too, proudly erect, his head a little forward; his speech was firm, his voice stronger and clearer than of wont, and an unusual energy and earnestness of purpose appeared visible in every gesture:

"It is necessary," said he in reply to the old man's question, and with slight trepidation, "that thou shouldst destroy every object likely to inculpate thee! That phial, first, which I had entirely forgotten; then the Count's papers, which thou hast ever kept in thy possession, and which I never chose to exert force or artifice to get from thee! My letters to thee also; especially the one I wrote to thee from Nantes! All these destroy, or give up into my hands, and I swear to stand by thee to the last!"

"Yes!" muttered Quinault, fumbling in his desk, and speaking with his head in it; "to the last *gasp*! Thou wouldst stand at the gibbet foot, and chuckle as I strangled!"

"Tamper not with me," growled D'Argenson, upon whom the notary's sarcasms and retorts were producing their effect, though he had up to this moment suppressed his anger from prudential motives; "I came hither amicably inclined; but if I can save thee, I can also lose thee!"

"Thou threatenest me then?" exclaimed Quinault, abruptly withdrawing his head from the inside of his desk, and staring at his adversary with an air approaching to defiance.

"No!" responding the other, cooling down; "I merely hinted at my power, which I would fain exercise for thy safety! I allowed thee to retain possession of those papers so long as they could serve thee only as guarantees of my sincerity towards thee, though I might at any period since my accession to office, have procured them by simply using one of the privileges attached to that office; for I could, without risk, have searched thy premises at any time, and placed the seal upon every lock in thy house; but I refrained! Those papers are become dangerous in thy hands! more so to *thee* than to me! 'Tis as a friend I counsel thee to give them up!"

"Indeed!" said the notary; "what if I refuse?"

"Nay, friend Etienne! But thou wilt not surely refuse! Consider the danger! Besides, can I not, as soon as thou art gone, take them without thy permission?"

"There is one small difficulty in the way," retorted Quinault, with an exultation that he sought not to conceal.

"*Tonnerre dieu!*" growled D'Argenson, writhing with anger; "thou wilt force me to employ harsh means! What is to prevent me from taking them away?"

"Thou dost not know where they are!" chuckled the notary.

"But thou wilt tell me, Etienne," said the Lieutenant of Police persuasively, more and more astonished at the change in his victim's tone, and beginning to suspect that he had mistaken his real character: "thou wilt give them up to me! They can do thee no good, and will do thee much harm!"

"And thee, too," retorted Quinault; "ah! ah! ah! I have *thee* now! Thou art not altogether beyond the reach of my vengeance!"

"Vengeance, friend Etienne? And for what? I confess that the papers thou holdest might compromise me to a certain extent; although no serious results could accrue to me from their contents becoming known! Still there are designing slanderers, and I have envious rivals who would not fail to turn the circumstance to account, and I need not tell thee how much such an *exposé* might tend to undermine me in the opinion of the King!"

"Then thou dost really attach great importance, to the possession or to the destruction of these papers, *friend* D'Argenson," inquired nault, sinking his voice to a confidential whisper.

"I do! I do!" replied D'Argenson hurriedly, in the same low tone.

"And if I give them up into thy hands, thou wilt really and truly save me from this dangerous position!"

"On my honour I promise it, Etienne!"

"What guarantee wilt thou give me?"

"My word! I can give thee none other! But that should suffice thee!"

"Suppose I have them no longer in my possession?"

The Lieutenant of Police turned deadly pale, and trembled perceptibly, though he almost instantly recovered his self-possession; Quinault observed the change, and attributing it to the right cause pursued the advantage he saw he had gained:

"Suppose," said he, "that suspecting thee of treachery to me—*me* whom thou hast ruined; *me* whom thou hast made to serve thy turn, and now seekest to destroy; *me* whom thou hast by turns caressed and discarded, flattered and menaced: suppose, I say, that in order to counteract thy treachery I should have determined to place myself for once upon an equality with thee by surrendering those damning papers to the custody of one of thine enemies!"

"But—but," stammered D'Argenson, "thou hast *not* done this? Thou hadst no cause to suspect my sincerity!"

"And Chamillart's letter!" exclaimed Quinault.

"Some secret enemy of thine, friend Etienne, against whom thou shouldst hasten to place thyself on thy guard."

"'Tis *thou*!—thou who art the secret enemy," replied the notary with fearful energy; "I know it! I have received certain information that 'tis *thou*! Proofs—palpable proofs too! Didst think I could always be thy tool—thy dupe! Did I ever have reason to doubt thy sincerity, sayst thou? Yes! often! True thou didst perform some of thy promises, but it was because thou hadst yet foul work to do! Even so lately as three months since, thou didst partly bribe, partly force me to—to forge a murdered man's signature to a deed intended to benefit *thee* alone; then, thou didst rob me of sixty-five thousand crowns! then, finding me grow irksome, thou didst betray me, thinking thus to rid thyself of me for ever! But no! I have had time to recal every thing; to think upon every thing; and to determine! An hour ago, I was a coward! I felt afraid to die! Since then I have made atonement for a few of my misdeeds; I am now once more a man! A man such as I was, Sieur D'Argenson, before crime had weighed down my soul! A man such as thou wilt never be, for crime was born in thee! Thou hast deceived *me*; I will have revenge for thy treachery though I die for it!"

"What—what dost thou mean?" interrupted D'Argenson, quailing he knew not why, before the decrepid old man; "thou hast no proof that I have deceived thee!"

"I have it here!" retorted the notary, striking his breast; "'tis the presentiment of years fulfilled! I know 'tis truth, because I feel it! Thou art a liar and a cheat! Thou hast wrought my destruction, and I will be revenged! Those papers are no longer in my possession! I have delivered them to one who will make good use of them!"

"Thou liest," hissed D'Argenson; "thou sayst this to cheat me! But I am not to be thus duped! I will ransack thy closets, thy chests, aye even to the walls will I pull down but that I will find them! Ho! Without there!"

Immediately upon hearing the signal, the door was thrust open, and a party of soldiers, five in number entered:

"Seize your prisoner," continued D'Argenson, rising from his seat and pointing to the notary; "in the name of the King I arrest him!"

Whilst two of the picket advanced to apprehend Quinault, the remainder drew up in a line so as to bar egress by the door; however, before they could reach him, he withdrew from his pocket a small phial that he had abstracted from his desk whilst engaged in conversation with D'Argenson, and suddenly carried it to his mouth; but perceiving the movement, and anticipating his intention, the latter bounded to his side, and dashed the vessel from his hands; the next moment he was struggling in the grasp of the soldiers.

"Ha! ha! ha!" shrieked the Lieutenant of Police, with savage delight; "thou wilt hang yet!"

"My heaviest curse upon thee," muttered Quinault, fiercely, making desperate efforts to break from his captors; "thou wert the mur-

derer of the Count de St. Angin, not I! 'Twas thou didst give me the poison! But thy turn will come 'ere long! My revenge shall reach thee yet! My everlasting——"

"Away with him, fools! *Mort dieu*! Do you intend to stand here all day? To the Bastile with him! I follow! Tell St. Marc to——"

At this moment, Quinault, who had continued to struggle, suddenly fell back into the soldiers' arms; D'Argenson uttered a faint exclamation of horror, and the men themselves shuddered and turned their heads; Quinault, overcome by intense excitement, and bursting with rage, in consequence of finding himself foiled in his meditated suicide, had ruptured a bloodvessel, and was now literally weltering in his blood, which gushed from his mouth and nose in one large, continuous stream.

There ensued a fearful pause that lasted some three or four minutes, all the assistants being perfectly horrified, D'Argenson himself not excepted. The notary, still conscious of all that had passed, and that his life was rapidly ebbing, made a dying effort to release himself from the soldiers, who no longer held him so firmly. For a few seconds the purple tide ceased to flow, and the moribond recovered himself sufficiently to stand erect; fixing his eyes, fearfully distended, and gleaming with the unnatural light that belongs to them only when they are about to close upon the world for ever, full upon D'Argenson, he raised his bony hands high over his head, and uttered a few words, but so inarticulately they could not be understood; then his arms dropped, and he once more staggered back, and would have fallen but for the soldiers; his face now became awfully distorted, every muscle of it being frightfully contracted; again he writhed, again stood erect, again extended his shrivelled hand menacingly towards his persecutor; twice he gasped for breath, twice his jaw dropped, and a shudder passed through his frame; at last he exclaimed in a hollow, unearthly whisper:

"Cu——urse thee!"

It was a last effort; his head fell upon his breast—his legs bent beneath him, powerless—a gurgling noise was heard in his throat—the blood once more rushed from his mouth and nostrils, saturating his clothes, and those of the soldiers who held him: he was dead.

D'Argenson sunk into a chair gazing at the scene in silence.

"What shall we do with him, Monseigneur?" asked one of the men.

The Lieutenant of Police started:

"Leave him there," answered he; "lay him down! Return you to your quarters."

The guards laid the dead man full-length upon the ground, in the pool his own blood had formed, and wheeling about withdrew: as soon as they were gone D'Argenson arose and locked the door.

A
1660
B
1661
D
1662
E
1663

CHAPTER LIII.

THE LIEUTENANT OF POLICE IN AN UNPLEASANT PREDICAMENT.

THRUSTING the key into his pocket, he returned to the spot where lay the stiffening body of his accomplice in iniquity, and after gazing at it for a few seconds with a perturbed countenance, gave it a violent kick, stamping on the face with his iron-heeled boot:

"My curse upon his soul," ejaculated he, grinding his teeth; "he spat in my face!"

He paused, and stooping down, placed his hand on his victim's heart, allowing it to rest there awhile:

"Quite dead!" he continued, resuming his erect posture, his eyes remaining fixed upon the collapsed features; "the old fox! Who could have told him 'twas I betrayed him to Chamillart? That letter contained no evidence to warrant his conviction! Fool that I was not to rid myself of him earlier! And yet, no! earlier would not have served my turn! besides, I should not have succeeded any better than to-day! He knew too well the importance of those accursed, damning papers to give them up to me! And but for the friendly warning he received, my plan must have succeeded! He would have subscribed to any terms rather than hang or spend the rest of his days in the Bastile! I knew him, and wrought accordingly! Long ago would I have forced him to divulge his secret, but that I had work for him to do, and hesitated to arouse his suspicions! It shall serve as a lesson to me for the future! And now, where shall I look for those papers! I know not! Yet, have them I must!"

The above reflections and many more of the same nature passed in his mind as he stood gazing at the corpse, a few being now and then expressed aloud, according to the degree of excitement that they occasioned; coming to a pause, he went to the door, listened at it for an instant or two, and crossing over to the notary's table, cast a cursory glance at the various deeds and documents that lay scattered upon it; he next raised the lid of his desk, and after a momentary hesitation, began examining its contents, but suddenly desisting from an apparently unsatisfactory search, looked about, musingly, at the labelled boxes on the shelves, and inquisitively into sundry square apertures in a capacious book-case that occupied nearly the whole of one side of the office; his eye then rested upon the large closet imbedded in the wainscot, in which Jacques was still concealed; he went up to it, and tried to open it, but it appeared locked, for the spy had pulled

the door close to, and held it firmly, there being ample room for him to stand upright within, as also sufficient space for his body between the doors and the rows of pigeon-holes at the back; D'Argenson's eyes glistened; he hesitated, cast a hasty glance at the corpse, and again advanced to where it lay.

Avoiding the pool of blood by which it was surrounded, and gathering the large skirts of his coat beneath his arms, he stooped down and commenced an inspection of the pockets of the notary's morning gown.

From one he took out a dry, hard crust of bread, a few pieces of paper crumpled up, a pocket-comb, and a small piece of twine; from the other, more paper, an old, soiled handkerchief, a snuff-box, and a bunch of keys; D'Argenson replaced the other articles, and arose:

"Should it indeed be as he said," muttered he; "should he really have entrusted them to any one—I am lost! But he cannot have done this! He would not have endangered his own neck for the sake of perilling mine! Besides, he had no friend save *me*, and only to a *friend* could he have confided a deposit so dangerous!"

Meanwhile, he made his way back to the closet, and was in the act of selecting from the bunch of keys, one likely for his purpose, when the doors were suddenly flung open, and to his consternation, the spy stood before him.

Any attempt to depict the mute, but brief scene that ensued, would be futile.

As soon as the first moment of astonishment was passed, however, D'Argenson carried his hand to his sword, but Jacques was too quick for him, and bounding to his side, wrenched the weapon from his grasp, after assisting him to draw it, and threw it to the other side of the apartment, firmly gripping its owner by the arm:

"We are even for once, Monseigneur," said he; "but the meeting is unexpected."

D'Argenson almost instantly recovered his habitual self-possession, at once divining what had passed between the spy and the notary, the menaces of the latter furnishing him with the clue; without attempting to release himself he answered:

"Dissimulation were useless! Thou hast heard all! On what terms can I purchase thy secrecy?"

"'Tis not to be bought, Monseigneur;" retorted Jacques, "besides, I make *no* terms with *thee*!"

"And the soldiers are gone!" thought D'Argenson; "could I only have foreseen this!"

"Come;" continued Jacques; "had I not met thee thus, I should have sought thee! Let us to business!"

"And what wantest thou of *me*, Sieur Jacques?" inquired the Lieutenant of Police.

"In the first place, Monseigneur, thou hast locked yonder door, and taken possession of the key! I shall thank thee to give it up!"

Having no longer a reason for keeping the key—though the case

would have been far different had he been outside and Jacques *in*—D'Argenson, somewhat reluctantly, for he did not relish the spy's peremptory manner, withdrew it from his pocket and handed it over.

"Sit down, now, and write," resumed Jacques, forcing D'Argenson into one of the chairs that stood close to the table.

"Write! Write what?" exclaimed the latter, snatching up a pen, for he perceived that resistance would be useless.

"An order to Monsieur de St. Marc," answered the spy, in a choking voice, "to set at liberty one Jacques Morin."

At mention of this name, the countenance of the Lieutenant of Police suddenly fell, assuming a darker expression, his mouth becoming affected with an involuntary nervous twitch, peculiar to him, when under the influence of any intense emotion.

"Jacques Morin!" said he, in a faltering tone; "what—what is he to thee, that thou seekest to set him at liberty?"

"Write, Monseigneur!" responded Jacques, briefly.

"*Tonnerre dieu!*" retorted the other, looking at the spy with an air of defiance; "thou can't not *make* me write if I choose not!"

"Monseigneur," retorted the latter with apparent calmness though in reality he was strongly excited; "do not trifle with me! You play with a desperate man!"

The Lieutenant of Police laughed outright, and deliberately depositing the pen upon the table folded his arms and leant back in his chair, his eyes fixed upon the speaker.

"I do not fear thee, Sieur Jacques," said he, "nor am to be bullied into compliance with thy strange request! What interest hast thou in the release of this man I once more ask? Besides, suppose it were no longer in my power to set him free!"

"What—do you mean, Monseigneur?" asked the spy, faltering, and turning suddenly pale.

"Why, suppose he were dead!" observed the other.

Jacques shuddered, but instantly recovering himself, said in a husky voice:

"Do *not* tamper with me, Monseigneur! That old man is my father!"

In turn D'Argenson manifested astonishment, but heard the announcement with secret gratification, hoping to turn the circumstance to good account against the spy, his countenance brightening up as he answered, after a short interval of silence:

"Thy father, Sieur Jacques! Well, he was alive three days ago! Still he may have died since *then!*"

"Of that will I assure myself, forthwith," returned Jacques; "his release, Monseigneur; his release! Oh, pray Heaven, he be still living!" and a tear rolled down his cheek.

"I told thee just now, Sieur Jacques," observed D'Argenson; "that I would not be bullied into compliance with thy request! If I sign thy father's release I must have some guarantee that he shall not be brought forward against me! Then again—"

"Listen now to *me*, Monseigneur;" exclaimed Jacques interrupting him; "I have thee entirely at my mercy, but will show thee none! 'Twas thou dids't instigate Quinault to murder the Count de St. Angin, for he has told me everything, and given to me all the papers that relate to that deed of blood, together with thy letters! Nay, more! Urged by conscience to confess his crimes, he has written a full disclosure of the transaction and appended his name thereto! This also have I!"

D'Argenson started, muttering to himself, but Jacques affecting not to perceive his trepidation continued:

"I hold too the deeds that the Count had about him on the night of the murder! All these did Quinault give me, scarcely an hour ago! Now refuse my demand, and with my own hands will I drag thee to a place where thou shalt remain without possibility of escape, until I have had time to lay the whole affair before His Majesty! Grant it, however, I tell thee before-hand that I will not promise not to denounce thee, nor will I give up the documents! Decide quickly for every moment is now to me a century!"

D'Argenson, who was in a measure prepared for some of these disclosures, needed not reflection to prompt him how to act; he saw at a glance the futility of opposition, and at the same moment conceived a plan of turning the tables upon his adversary, not, however, before he had resolved upon making one attempt to conciliate him.

"Thou art a bold man, Sieur Jacques," said he, "and hast rendered me a few important services, and before this affair of the Baron de St. Auney's, I had no reason to complain of thee! I esteemed thee; nay, do still, for I can appreciate thy many qualities! I even experienced friendship towards thee! Why should we be foes? Come! I will release thy father! I will be content to remain at thy mercy as a guarantee that I will be staunch to thy interests nor seek to injure thee or thine! But let us be friends! Wealth shall be thine; rank if thou wilt; only let us be friends!"

Jacques could scarcely contain his indignation till D'Argenson stopped speaking, who could not but remark the contemptuous expression of his countenance; however, the spy *did* hear him to the end, when he replied:

"The blood of my father is on thy hands, Monseigneur! The blood too of one whom we have served for more than a century and a half! And canst thou offer me thy friendship? No! Monseigneur! Wealth I require not; rank I despise, unless it sits with honour on the noble! Did I accept thy offer, I should become as vile as thou, whom nor tie of friendship, nor oath, however sacred, can bind! Thou would'st entangle *me*, as thou didst yonder poor sordid wretch; as thou hast the Baron de St. Auney; as thou would'st the living Count de St. Angin! Ha! Monseigneur! This thou did'st not expect to hear. Know that I have placed him beyond thy reach! that I will protect him whilst I have life, and that in spite of thee, the day is not far distant, when the shield of the St. Angins shall again grace the halls of La Gâcherie! Friends with thee indeed! No! We are foes and must re-

main so till death! I despise thee too much to give thee *my* friendship, and thou fearest *me* too much to give me other than thy hate! My father's release, Monseigneur, or I drag thee hence, bound hand and foot; within five minutes I can summon friends to my assistance who owe *thee no* friendship!"

The Lieutenant of Police took a slip of paper and a pen, and wrote the order for the old man's release.

"There!" said he, pushing it over to Jacques.

"Good!" ejaculated the latter.

"Any thing else?" asked D'Argenson sneeringly.

"Yes, Monseigneur," retorted the spy, after ascertaining that the document was in due form; "thou must give me another, in favour of Baron de St. Auney!"

"The Baron is a prisoner of state," observed D'Argenson; "no order of mine, unless countersigned by His Majesty, can set him free!"

"Write it," answered Jacques; "leave the rest to me!"

D'Argenson at once complied; the spy was even surprised at his alacrity.

"Any thing else?" exclaimed the former, with peculiar emphasis, handing him the paper.

"Thou hast in thy possession," resumed Jacques, assuring himself that the mandate he had just received was also in rule, "certain papers belonging to the Baron; give them to me!"

"Papers! what papers?" ejaculated D'Argenson, endeavouring to conceal his trepidation by feigning surprise.

"Papers of which thou didst take unlawful possession," resumed the spy; "thou knowest!

"I do not!" was the reply.

"'Tis false, Monseigneur! Thou didst take them from the Baron on the night he went with thee to the Bastile!"

The Lieutenant of Police was dismayed.

"Dost thou mean Quinault's receipt for the sixty-five thousand crowns?" asked he, greatly embarrassed.

"I do, Monseigneur! As also the bonds upon which Quinault sued him in thy name! The whole of those documents thou must give up to me, for thou hast been paid thy due! Thou hast also the bond upon which Quinault advanced me one hundred thousand crowns! I must have *it* too!"

"'Tis a forgery!" muttered D'Argenson, asserting what he felt to be an untruth.

"'Tis *no* forgery," retorted Jacques; "thou knowest that the Count de St. Angin lives!"

"Dost think I keep such documents about my person, Sieur Jacques?"

"Yes, Monseigneur!"

D'Argenson attempted a laugh, as if in contempt of the spy's belief, but it was easy to perceive that it was forced.

"If this were the case, *my friend*," said he, "I should at least have concealed the fact!"

"Thou should'st have kept thy secret from the notary!" rejoined Jacques.

"Confusion!" muttered the Lieutenant of Police; "but never mind!"

Still he hesitated.

"Come, Monseigneur!" exclaimed Jacques, impatiently.

With exceeding ill grace, D'Argenson dipped into the large pocket of his coat, and thence withdrew a bundle of papers, which he handed to the spy, who examined them separately, and having ascertained that all those he had demanded were there, thrust them into his vest.

"And now for my father!" ejaculated he with emotion; "whom thou hast consigned to a living death for five and twenty years; the thought is horrible! Oh, Monseigneur! A child's curse is upon thee for his parent's wrongs!"

"Thou art going hence to the Bastile, then?" inquired D'Argenson hastily.

"I am," replied Jacques; "no hands but mine shall remove my father's bonds!"

D'Argenson could not control the secret pleasure he experienced on hearing this, for only a few days previously he had cancelled the safe-conduct Jacques still possessed, having no longer occasion for his services, or rather no more opportunities of employing him on errands thither, and of this circumstance he concluded Jacques was ignorant, as he indeed was.

"I will accompany thee," said he in answer to the spy, and with a degree of animation that the latter failed not to remark, though it was scarcely perceptible, being in fact less apparent in the manner of the speaker, than in the peculiar expression of his eye.

"To trap *me* as thou didst the Baron?" cried Jacques, much to the surprise of the former; "no, Monseigneur; I go thither alone! Before I quit thee, however, I have one last request to make."

"What is it, Sieur Jacques?" demanded the mortified Lieutenant of Police; "*Tonnerre dieu!* There are bounds to everything."

"Not to thy wickedness," retorted the spy; "but to the point! Thou must write me a safe-conduct from the Bastile, and date it this day; nay, this very hour!"

"But thou hast one already," replied the Lieutenant of Police, now completely at fault, for this was an unexpected stroke, and entirely overthrew his recently-formed scheme.

"I have," returned Jacques; "but 'tis long since I made use of it! Since then thou and I have become enemies, and I am not inclined to place myself in thy power for lack of due precaution! He who plays with the wolf, must expect to be bitten! Write, Monseigneur!"

Although compelled to accede to this demand likewise, D'Argenson did not entirely lose courage. He calculated that nearly an hour must elapse before Jacques could accomplish the deliverance of his father,

on account of the formalities to be gone through, and the time it would take him to reach the *château*. Expecting to quit the notary's with him, he purposed to allow him time to get to the Bastile, but to follow him closely thither, and trap him before he could possibly effect his retreat with the old man: but he reckoned without his host.

Jacques took the safe-conduct, bowing as he received it, and turning on his heel made for the door; the Lieutenant of Police arose also for the purpose of following him out, first picking up his sword which lay in a far angle of the apartment; taking advantage of this movement, Jacques quickly unlocked the door, and thrust the key into the key-hole outside:

"Thou must consider thyself a prisoner here," said he as D'Argenson came up, "until I release thee! Within two hours hence thou shalt be again at liberty;" and before D'Argenson could reply, he slipped out of the door, and locking it, put the key into his pocket and went away.

"*Sang dieu!*" growled the enraged Lieutenant, stamping and cursing vehemently; "I did not expect this! What is to be done? I have only one chance left, and *that* a slender one; yet slender though it be, 'tis one I must not lose. The first thing to be done is to get out of this toad-hole!"

CHAPTER LVI.

HOW JACQUES CLAIMED HIS FATHER AT THE BASTILE, AND WHAT OCCURRED TO HIM.

No sooner had D'Argenson made up his mind to free himself, than he set about it, for he knew that Jacques would use all expedition, and though he had calculated that the business the latter had in hand would occupy nearly an hour, he was not the less aware that it might possibly be completed within half the time, provided none were lost.

His whole anxiety was to reach the Bastile before Jacques quitted it: but how break from his present bondage? The window, besides being up two storeys, was too strongly barricaded with iron-bars to afford him egress, nor was there any possibility of opening it within any given number of minutes—for he now counted minutes and seconds too—so securely was it fastened. Escape by the door in the natural way, had been cut off by the spy, and yet this was his only

chance; as Jacques, however, had appropriated the key to his own use for a while, D'Argenson saw but one alternative, namely, to force the lock; indeed he had seen this very alternative from the beginning, his only embarrassment being how, in the absence of implements, he should effect his purpose.

His task was one of extreme difficulty.

The lock, an exceeding massive one, with three bolts, was not fixed *on* the door—which was of oak two inches thick at least—but let *into* it, so that the bolts shot into the door-post, being retained in its place by six large screws, and two bands of iron embracing it cross-wise, which were fastened each by two screws. One glance sufficed to shew D'Argenson that forcing it was out of the question; he therefore resolved upon removing the lock itself, and began to look about for some tool wherewith to accomplish his object.

His search in the *étude* proving unsuccessful, he tried the keys upon the lock of the door opening into the inner room; to his dismay not one would serve; suddenly recollecting himself, however, he repaired to the notary's desk, and took thence an old rusted key; but in spite of his efforts and his curses, the door resisted all his attempts, for the key would not fit the lock.

Dashing it down with a loud imprecation, he stood a moment irresolute, absolutely despairing; but he was not a man to despair long, and his ready invention soon suggested to him a means of carrying out his intentions. Drawing his sword, he crossed to the chimney, and laying the weapon across one of the andirons or dogs in the hearth, with the other struck it a smart blow near the hilt; the blade snapped short off, and with this substitute for a chisel, he went to work.

He commenced operations upon one of the iron-bands over-lapping the lock, but notwithstanding the perseverance that he wrought with, nearly five minutes elapsed before he succeeded in even moving one screw; at length it yielded. Knowing the value of every moment, he did not give himself the trouble of renewing his attempts upon the under-screw by which the iron band was still confined, but grasping the latter, placed his foot against the door, and wrenched it from its fastening; a similar process, applied to the remaining band, produced a similar result; within the space of ten minutes he had removed both.

He next directed his attention to the screws by which the lock was fixed into the door.

His assiduity appeared to be applied in vain, for not only were these deeply driven into their socket, but rusted there; D'Argenson cursed and wrought, and wrought and cursed, until the perspiration rolled down his face, oozing from every pore; still was he none the more forward; at last, his unwearied efforts were crowned with partial success; the first screw yielded a little, then more, then fairly gave way; five yet remained.

Somewhat encouraged, he re-doubled his exertions, and after prolonged attempts, the second screw in turn yielded, then the third.

He was on thorns; nearly half an hour had elapsed since Jacques' departure.

In order to abridge his operations, he had recourse to one of the andirons, intending to use it as a lever to *prize* off the lock, but found he should be obliged to remove a fourth screw in order to get a *purchase* upon it; to this task he of necessity resigned himself, his anxiety every moment increasing; still he wrought on until he had accomplished the removal of the fourth screw.

Inserting now the broken blade of his sword between the wood and the lock, he strove to force the latter out; but the vehemence with which he applied his strength to accomplish this, caused the portion that remained of the blade to snap short off within an inch of the hilt; the untoward accident caused him to foam with rage, which he vented in kicks showered at the door, and an interminable string of execrations; however, his passion lasted only until he found that the broken hilt would still serve his turn, and though it cost him double labour, on account of the increased difficulty he experienced in handling his implements, he succeeded at last in loosening the lock sufficiently to allow of the andiron coming into play as a lever, and finally wrenched it entirely off.

But Jacques had been gone now quite an hour, and the chances were that he had already quitted the Bastile.

Spurred on by his thrist for vengeance, though despairing of success, D'Argenson no sooner saw the way clear, than he rushed out of the house, greatly to the amazement of the porter, who was just then engaged with the Cerberus of a neighbouring house in discussing the various causes, probable and possible, that had that morning brought there the Lieutenant of Police, and so many soldiers.

A man walking at a moderately fast pace may go from the *Rue vielle du Temple* to the Bastile within a few seconds of ten minutes; D'Argenson ran the whole way, never relaxing his speed, rather increasing it on the contrary, the nearer he approached his goal; so great was his hurry, the sentinel at the outer gate did not recognize him until he had passed in, when he presented arms to his back, which was all that was visible of him, and even this rapidly disappeared.

He reached the first *corps-de-garde*, which it will be remembered defended the triple draw-bridge thrown over the small ditch dividing the Entry Court or Court of the Elm from the Small Court, or as it was subsequently denominated, the Court of Government,* and calling the officer on duty to him, said, as soon as he recovered sufficient breath to speak distinctly:

"Let no one pass *out* till I return! Not a soul! Not even Monsieur de St. Marc!"

* It was not so called until after the removal of the Governor's residence from the interior of the fortress to the new buildings which were erected for his accommodation in this Court. This change took place after the accession of Louis Quinze, in 1715.

The officer made the military salute, and D'Argenson proceeded into the *château*, his unexpected arrival, as usually the case, throwing the authorities into some consternation, which was in nowise diminished by the anxiety depicted in his countenance, flushed by his race, and from which the perspiration streamed.

He found St. Marc and Corbé in the Council-chamber, both of whom started on seeing him enter in such a plight; but he gave them no time to wonder what could be the object of his visit, for addressing both at once, he inquired hurriedly whether "*Jacques had been there?*"

"No, Monseigneur," was St. Marc's reply.

"*Sang dieu!*" exclaimed he, bursting out into a savage, exulting chuckle; "then I am yet in time! He will not tarry, Sieur Governor! Thou wilt inform me of his arrival! I shall be in the Iron Mask's chamber!"

With this he hurriedly withdrew, leaving the Governor and his nephew in considerable perplexity.

He had not absented himself more than a quarter of an hour when Jacques made his appearance: he entered with a firm step, and without the least hesitation of manner, looking neither to the right of him nor to the left, but advanced deliberately up to the table at which St. Marc was seated, and handing him the paper he had procured from D'Argenson, said:

"Sieur Governor, thou hast in confinement here an old man, one Jacques Morin by name! I am come to claim his liberation. This is my warranty!"

"'Tis the old man in the dungeon of the ditch of the Bertaudière," whispered Corbé to his uncle, whilst the latter cast his eye over the first document.

"Yes!" muttered the Governor. "Hast thou a safe-conduct for thyself," said he, addressing Jacques.

"I have," answered the latter, tendering him the one which he had exhibited on a former occasion.

St. Marc glanced at it, and in a half-jibing, half-exulting voice, remarked:

"This order has been cancelled by Monseigneur D'Argenson!"

"Indeed," observed Jacques, whose previous suspicions were now justified, as also his fore-sight in procuring another safe-conduct whilst he held the Lieutenant of Police in his power; "here, Monsieur; here is another!" and he handed it to him.

"That alters the case," muttered St. Marc, bestowing a side glance at Corbé.

The amiable pair smiled significantly, and whispered together for a moment; Corbé then withdrew, leaving Jacques standing in the middle of the apartment; St. Marc resumed his writing.

The Lieutenant-governor was not long gone; when he returned, he was immediately followed by D'Argenson and a picket of eight soldiers, who as they entered, surrounded the spy, almost before he was aware of it.

"Ha! ha! Maitre Jacques!" shouted the Lieutenant of Police; "now we are even! *Ventre-bleu!* I have caged thee at last! and in spite of thy precautions!"

The spy saw that he was lost, but beyond the sudden pallor that over-spread his countenance, for he thought of his father, he manifested no trepidation; indeed his eye brightened after the first shock of the surprise was over, and he returned his adversary's gaze without quailing, but answered nothing:

"Search him!" continued D'Argenson.

Two of the soldiers proceeded to obey their superior's command, he looking on with the greatest anxiety, and Jacques submitting to the process unresistingly: opposition would in fact have proved unavailing.

But how great was D'Argenson's consternation and rage, when the men upon turning the spy's pockets inside out, found them empty.

"In his breast! In his breast! *Mort dieu!*" shouted the Lieutenant of Police.

Jacques hustled off the men, by a jerk of his arm, and of his own accord threw open his jerkin:

"I know what thou seekest, Monseigneur," said he, a scarcely perceptible smile illuminating his face; "to spare further trouble, know that I have already dispossessed myself of those papers, for thine especial benefit!" and he bowed.

"Then by St. Marc thou shalt never quit these walls alive," vociferated the Lieutenant of Police, excited to frenzy by this unexpected announcement, which completely overthrew his new-born hopes, and imminently menaced him with disgrace.

"If within three days from this I am not at liberty, Sieur D'Argenson," retorted Jacques, calmly, "I would not give *my* life for thine!"

"But who art thou, and what, strange man," said the former individual, after a pause, that was very embarrassing to all the assistants at this scene, and during which he had time to reflect upon the expediency of altering his tactics, "that thou art thus virulent against me? Restore those papers to me, and I will release thy father! Nay, only pass thy word to give them up to me, and I solemnly promise that thou shalt lead him hence, a free man!"

"Scarcely an hour ago, Monseigneur," replied Jacques, "I refused to make any terms with thee! So do I now!"

"I was then in thy power, Sieur Jacques; now thou art in mine!"

"I am Monseigneur! Thou hast power over my liberty I grant—"

"Over thy life, say," shrieked the Lieutenant of Police, interrupting him; "a word from me will hang thee even within this very hour!"

"Threats, Monseigneur? Dost thou not know me better? Take my life if thou wilt, thou wilt not live a week to enjoy thy triumph! Quinault would have cheated the gibbet of its prey by taking his own life, perhaps that alternative may be left to thee!"

D'Argenson perceived by the glances that passed between St. Marc and Corbé and the soldiers, that these recriminations were dangerous

to him, but although he could have brought them at once to a close by ordering Jacques to be conducted away, he felt an irresistible impulse to continue the colloquy, hoping still to gain him over by working on some weak point in his character which he trusted unexpectedly to unmask

Satisfied that if he retorted upon Jacques in the same sarcastic strain as Jacques attacked him, the disclosures of this individual would prove anything but pleasant, besides opening the eyes of his subordinates to facts he preferred their remaining strangers to, he bit his lips as a mode of appeasing his anger, and assailed the spy where he knew him to be most vulnerable.

"I will not bandy words with thee," said he; "that thou art brave enough to despise life, and bold enough to place it in danger, thy present conduct now proves! But remember, thy errand, hither, Sieur Jacques!"

"Thou canst not think I have forgotten it, Sieur Lieutenant!"

"Granted," resumed D'Argenson, "that thou hast *not* forgotten that thy father still lives, though a prisoner; that his liberty, his life are in my hands—"

The spy groaned; D'Argenson went on:

"I say that thou canst not, that thou *dost* not love thy father—"

Jacques said not a word, but a tear stood in his eyes, and then rolled thence down his cheek as he turned them upwards toward Heaven; a sob too struggled to escape from his bosom, which he stifled as it rose, as if ashamed of betraying his weakness.

D'Argenson watched him narrowly, and continued, for he had abruptly paused, perceiving how the spy was affected:

"Or if thou didst love him—if thou didst hold to see him once more free, thou would'st not refuse *any* terms on which his liberty might be purchased!"

"I did not come, Monseigneur," proudly replied Jacques, "to *purchase* my father's freedom! I came to claim it as a right—as an act of justice! He was incarcerated in this foul den, lest he should raise up a dead witness against thee and thy accomplice Quinault! But neither duty nor filial love would warrant me in subscribing to terms such as thou proposest! Besides, I have a duty, a sacred duty, to discharge towards the Baron de St. Auney, and towards the young Count de St. Angin! Shall these be forgotten? No! Monseigneur! Tempt me not! 'tis useless! I *demand* my father's release!"

"Give up those papers," replied D'Argenson, glowing with anger at mention of two names so hateful, "and thou and thy father shall go free hence!"

"For the last time no, Monseigneur!" retorted Jacques, firmly; "I have them not in my possession, nor will I divulge where they are! I shall say no more!"

"Seize him, then; *mort-dieu!*" shouted D'Argenson; "bear him away! What cell is free, Sieur St. Marc!"

"None, Monseigneur! We are full!"

"And the dungeons?"

"Full, Monseigneur! Two in each, except in the dungeon of the ditch of the Bertaudière!"

"And who is there?" inquired D'Argenson.

"The mad-man," answered St. Marc; "old Jacques Morin!"

The spy shuddered, and clasped his hands in silent agony: D'Argenson looked at him fixedly, and chuckled in his face.

"Conduct him thither, then," said he, waving his hand; "he came to see his father; he shall see him! Ah! ah! ah! Sieur Jacques! I have thee now!"

"Thou art a monster," replied the spy, in a husky voice; "but I warn thee in time! Thy life is in danger! Mark well what I say! If within three days I am not at liberty, there will be mischief done! Beware, Monsiegneur!"

"I will chance the mischief!" retorted he; "thou shalt never quit these walls alive, nor thy father either, who may even now outlive thee, unless I find it more convenient to hang him first, and thee afterwards! *Sang dieu!* I will teach thee how to defy *me*!"

"I do, then, Monseigneur D'Argenson!" answered Jacques; "even here, where thou art supreme—"

"Away with him," shouted the Lieutenant of Police; "I am tired of this braggadocio!"

Jacques turned proudly on his heel, and fell into the vacant space indicated by the sub-officer in charge of the picket, Corbé bringing up the rear; in this order they quitted the Council-chamber.

Shortly afterwards, D'Argenson left the fortress to return to Quinault's, in order to place his goods and chattels under the official seal.

With regard to the delay that had resulted so fatally, in so far as the spy was concerned, the cause can soon be explained.

Although provided with another safe-conduct from D'Argenson, so many instances of this individual's treachery had come to his cognizance, that he strongly doubted the prudence of repairing to the Bastile on so delicate and dangerous a mission as the one he had to execute, without first placing the important documents he possessed in a place of safety; and so wholly did this idea absorb his mind, that he considered it in the light of a warning—a secret presentiment of over-hanging evil—nor in spite of all the philosophy and resolution of a mind endowed with more than common energy, could he overcome the impulse of listening to its dictates. Instead then of continuing his progress towards the Bastile, upon quitting Quinault's house he turned into the Rue St. Paul, the scene of his late rescue, and made the best of his way thence to Lutetia. Depositing the valuable papers in question, in the hands of his trusty friend Democritus—whom he found regaling himself with one of Æsopus' favourite dishes—he gave him certain verbal instructions, with strict injunctions to follow them to the letter in the event of his return not

taking place within a given time, and shaking the philosopher cordially by the hand, departed to fulfil his filial errand: the result is known.

* * * * * * *

It was midnight!

In the dungeon of the ditch of the Bertaudiére tower, sat two human beings, the one an old, decrepid man, with a long beard, white as snow, reaching half way down his scarcely clad body, whose flesh and muscle had wasted away from his bones, fibre by fibre, until nothing now remained save the thread upon which his life hung; whose eyes were lustreless, whose voice was tuneless, and whose limbs were paralyzed; the other, a man in the full prime and vigour of youth, with the sinews of an ox, the frame of a Hercules, the eye of an eagle, and the courage of a lion.

Five and twenty years before, the old man had entered that den, the living prototype of the younger man!

The former was reclining upon a stone—his couch—upon which the younger had spread the clean straw given him to form his own bed; he had cast his cloak about his aged companion whose head rested upon his shoulder, and one arm upon his knee! the gray light of a full moon streamed upon them through one long, narrow aperture, the only one by which air was admitted.

The old man had not yet spoken to his co-mate; but he had wept because he was kind, and fallen asleep upon his bosom, like a child!

Whilst the old man slept, the other watched, gazing upon his countenance the while, with the large tears rolling down his manly cheeks!

The two prisoners were Jacques and his father.

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CHAPTER LV.

BY THE REVELATION OF AN IMPORTANT SECRET JACQUES SECURES THE CO-OPERATION OF RU IN A HAZARDOUS ENTERPRISE.

All night the old man slept, starting up at intervals only to nestle again closer upon the bosom of his unknown friend, for he had not yet recognized his son: indeed how could he?

During that long night Jacques had ample time to reflect upon the horrible tortures which his parent must have undergone during the period of his solitary confinement, a circumstance of itself sufficient to deprive him of reason; while he pondered, a deep prayer escaped his lips, accompanying a solemn vow never to rest until he had accomplished the great purpose to which he had devoted the remainder of his existence, and the entire energies of his mind.

He knew, if Democritus followed the instructions he had received with the packet of papers, that before noon that day, these would be in the possession of Madame de Maintenon, who would at once procure the King's order for his release, the revelations these documents contained being of a nature fully to open the monarch's eyes to the true character of his Lieutenant of Police; thus, for his own safety he was little concerned, but he entertained no hopes of his father's liberation, to accomplish which he had risked so much, and to leave whom a prisoner, when he himself should be free, was a thought unbearable in the extreme, suggestive besides of fears for his life, D'Argenson having powerful motives for depriving the old man of even the few short days that it had yet to run. True that his own liberty once assured, he could soon make interest to procure his father's, but who was to answer for his parent's life during the time that he should be, perforce, absent on his filial mission?

In this painful dilemma he resolved upon effecting his escape with him; it was, as regarded himself, only forestalling his release by a few hours, for he doubted not but that the King's mandate commanding it would arrive in the course of that day.

There was a second personage likewise, concerning whom he felt equally solicitous, namely, the Baron de St. Auney, whose sojourn in confinement he knew would not be protracted, once D'Argenson's consent to his liberation in the King's hands, a document of itself annulling the motives for his further detention, and which, upon de Maintenon's representations, Louis would no longer object to sign.

But notwithstanding the precautions he had taken to baffle D'Argenson at every point, he was not without apprehension as to the

contingencies that might occur to delay the fulfilment of his wishes, a delay that his opponent might improve to his own advantage, should he by any chance obtain a clue to the possessor of the documents in question; thus, reflection only confirmed him in the resolution he had taken, and he awaited the arrival of his jailer, Ru, with the utmost impatience, for through him alone could he hope to effect his object.

It was yet quite dark in the cell, although the sun had long since arisen, and his father still slumbered, his respirations so gentle as scarcely to be distinguishable. Several times did Jacques approach his cheek close to the old man's nostrils to assure himself that he breathed at all, and lay his hand upon his heart to convince himself that it still throbbed. At length a dim light, scarcely enough to give it the appearance of twilight, illumined one angle of the dungeon; a few minutes more and it grew stronger; another short interval, and it had gradually crept down the side of the wall, streaming upon the prostrate form of his aged sire; it played with a sickly hue upon his countenance for a brief space, then gradually vanished, and all was darkness again.

During a quarter of a century no more sun-light than this had ever penetrated into that den of solitude and gloom!

A more than usually vigorous movement that Jacques made to scare away, for the fiftieth time, a troop of huge rats that had at as many different intervals during his short stay there, persevered in their attacks upon the leather of his boots, startled the old man from his sleep; extending his long hand, and drawing it down Jacques' face, he said in a hollow whisper:

"Who art thou that hast kept me so warm?"

They were the first words that had as yet escaped his lips. Jacques burst into tears: he could not answer.

"'Tis a long time since I felt warm," continued the old man, heedless of his companion's emotion as of his silence; "'tis good to be warm after being cold so many years!"

"Father! father!" sobbed Jacques, pressing his sire to his bosom, and embracing him.

"Don't! don't!" resumed the latter; "thy tears scald my cheek! oh! how they burn! Why dost thou weep? And who art thou that weepest thus?"

"I am thy son; Jacquot! But thou can'st not see me, father! there is no light here! I am come to fetch thee away!" and again he pressed him to his heart.

Jacques felt the hot tears fall upon his hand, from his father's eyes; a suppressed sob burst from his bosom.

Nature's voice spoke whilst Reason remained dumb!

"Jacquot! Jacquot!" muttered the old man, remembering the name of endearment by which he used to call his child; "my boy, Jacquot! No! Thou art mocking me! Jacquot is a child! Did not the gypsies steal him?"

"Indeed, indeed, father, I *am* Jacquot; a child then, but a man now!—"

"Don't drive them away," suddenly exclaimed the other with peevishness, sensible to the movement Jacques made to brush away one of the obnoxious vermin with which the place swarmed, and that he felt had crept upon his father's face; "they won't harm thee! they are my companions; my friends! Don't drive them away!"

"Well, I won't, father! But look up now in my face, and tell me if thou canst see it!"

But his father remained mute, withdrawing from him to sit huddled up on the stone-couch, regardless of all that he said to recal old times to his memory.

Jacques wept in silence, hoping that in a little while his sire would again address him.

He was not mistaken; in about a quarter of an hour the old man once more spoke:

"Jacquot! Jacquot!" said he; "where art thou?"

"Here, father," replied Jacques, embracing him; "can'st thou not see me?"

"I see only a dark shadow, but I hear thy voice, and feel thy breath upon my cheek! Closer to me, child! closer! Art thou indeed my boy Jacquot! Where is thy mother, then, and Beatrice, thy sister?"

Jacques could only sob in reply; a pause followed which his father interrupted:

"I understand," said he, in a low, solemn tone; "they are dead; both of them! My poor wife! my dear child! Why am I not dead too?"

"Thou hast been spared, father, to bless thy son! Providence has sent me hither to release thee! Before long thou shalt again breathe the fresh air, and see the sun, and the sky, and the green fields! If my mother and my sister are dead, I remain to thee, and thou shalt be happy yet!"

"Jacquot! my boy Jacquot!" ejaculated the other, whose reason was fast returning with the sympathies recently awakened; "art thou indeed he? My eyes are grown dim, or I am blind quite, or there is no light here, else I should see thee! But I can touch thee! Draw nearer to me! There! Hast thou a beard? Let me feel thy face! Why, thou art indeed a man? Hold out thine arm, now, that I may grasp thy sinews and learn if thou art strong! So! Why, Jacquot, thou art a giant, and I thought thee still a child! But I had forgotten all! Oh, bless thee my boy, bless thee, if thou art indeed Jacquot!"

The poor old man burst into a convulsive flood of tears, and falling into his son's arms, sobbed like a child, caressing him at intervals and calling him by name.

"Tell me, truly," said he, after a while, "art thou sure thy mother and thy sister are both dead?"

"My poor mother I know is dead, father;" responded the spy; Beatrice is still alive, but she is ill, very ill; dying I fear; perhaps by "this time dead too!"

Another lapse of silence followed, which old Morin again broke:

"Why should I have hoped to see them again?" said he; "they would not have known me after an absence of five and twenty years!

Yes! Five and twenty years! For did they not say so when they brought that angel into my dungeon! Oh, my son! tis a horrid tale I have to tell! Thou didst not know the Count! they murdered him! Poison did it! But I cannot tell thee all now; it would take me too long! I will, when I feel stronger! Thou wilt not leave me again alone, wilt thou?"

"No, father, no! I came hither to seek thee—to liberate thee, and I will do it! But do not think of the Count! I know all! Quinault—"

"Ha!" gasped the old man with sudden energy; "'twas he! he and D'Argenson who did it! I caught them almost in the act! I accused them of it to their face, and they threw me into this dungeon, lest I should raise the dead in judgment against them! They called me mad when I was here, and truly I think I must have been mad some part of the time, for I can remember nothing! Since the first day I was thrust into this hole, all has been to me as one long night! Shadows have come and departed in silence, without heeding my prayers to be restored to liberty! Sometimes they laughed in my face, and called me a maniac! then I held my peace! But, oh God, what I have suffered! Do not leave me again, Jacquot, my boy; I shall die if thou dost! I would live to see the murderers of my old master hanged like dogs!"

"Chut, father, chut! Thou wilt fatigue thyself! I tell thee that I know all! Quinault confessed his crime to me! 'Twas he told me thou wert here! But he is dead—"

"Dead!" ejaculated Morin; "and D'Argenson?"

"He sent me hither!"

"Thou art then a prisoner, my son! Did'st not thou say thou camest to liberate me? What meanest thou then?"

"I mean what I have said, father, though now a prisoner, as thou art!"

"There are stone walls between us and liberty, Jacquot," responded the old man; "and jailers to guard them, whose hearts, are as hard as those stones!"

"I know it, father; still do I not despair!"

"But my limbs are sinewless, my son; I cannot assist thee! I cannot walk!"

"Poor father!" murmured Jacques, caressing him; "I will carry thee! Never will I abandon thee!"

"Heaven bless thee, Jacquot! Who but a son would talk thus, and risk so much! Yes! thou art my son; my own boy; my Jacquot; whom I thought lost! Oh, how we wept, thy mother and I, when we found that the Bohemians had carried thee away! Where hast thou been? What hast thou done since then? Yet, no! why should I seek to learn? Have we not met again? Let us hence! I long to breathe the fresh air! Up, Jacquot! up! let us be gone!"

"'Tis not yet time, father! Calm thyself awhile! thou wilt require all thy strength! Thou shiverest! let me cover thee with my cloak! Wilt thou sleep again? pillow thy head on my bosom!"

With almost child-like instinct, the old man obeyed the suggestion of his son, and exhausted by the effort of speaking, and not less by the re-action upon his shattered frame of the various emotions he had experienced within the last hour, soon began to doze; in this state he remained the better part of an hour, when the entry of Ru caused him suddenly to start up; but only to cling closer to his son.

"Ah, Ru," said Jacques, "is it thou? I began to grow impatient for thy visit!"

"Fine place this to learn patience in though," retorted he of the keys, setting down two pitchers, and two loaves; "but I'm sorry you're in trouble! I've brought your victuals! See; white bread! there's water in this pitcher, and wine in that! I put it in a pitcher because the old one won't suspect anything, if he should take into his head to come and ask how you slept! If I had known that old man was your father, I would have fed him better; but I did'nt know it, till last night!"

"The fault is none of thine, Ru;" resumed Jacques; "but thou cans't now make amends for all! I need thy assistance!"

"Be quick and tell me what you want," retorted the *porte-clefs*, "for I'm watched! If you don't want it directly, I'll come again in an hour! I shall have something to do in Number Two then!"

"Come then in an hour, Ru, and I'll tell thee what service I require! But listen to me a moment! I will pay thee well for it! Thou shalt have more gold than thou can'st carry at once! Thou lovest gold, Ru!"

"Don't I!" ejaculated Ru; "but I don't want gold from you!"

"'Tis not *my* gold thou shalt have, but St. Marc's—but Corbé's!"

"Famous!" muttered the turnkey, rubbing his hands; "but how am I to get at it? If you know where they keep it, you must be famous cunning! I don't, and I've watched 'em like a cat does a rat!"

"I do know, friend Ru; I have been twice in the place; the first time it was empty; the second I felt bags of money, lying up in a heap in one corner! If I tell thee where it is, wilt thou lend me thy aid?"

"I don't want gold to help you," replied Ru; "you've given me enough; more than I shall ever spend! But I should like to cheat St. Marc and Corbé, so I'll say yes!"

"The money is as much thine as their's! Come to me in an hour, I shall have had more time to think! Do thou meanwhile assure thyself that I have told thee truth!"

In a few words Jacques communicated to the *porte-clefs*, the secret of the closet in the wall adjoining the council-chamber, having on the night of the Baron's re-incarceration, made the discovery of the two-fold use for which it was intended; Ru listened attentively to the directions given for finding the hidden spring, and with a renewal of his former promise to return in an hour, departed upon his voyage of discovery.

During his absence, the spy made his father drink a few mouthfuls of wine, which considerably revived him, feeding him, moreover, with

morsels of bread sopped in the same, he himself making a hearty meal off the remainder; the hour thus passed rapidly away, although almost in silence, for the old man gradually relapsed into his former condition of mental abstraction, giving no indication of his consciousness of Jacques' presence, other than was conveyed in an occasional glance, to thank him for some new act of kindness.

Ru returned within the period he had named: he had not brought a torch this time, so that Jacques could not see the mischievous exultation depicted on his face, but he heard him chuckle long and loudly, and slap his thighs as though in a perfect ecstasy of merriment, and after a few moments caught glimpses of a shadow capering about amidst the gloom, which at last came to a stand-still close to where he sat, when a voice exclaimed:

"Ha! ha! ha! I've found it out! Four bags already!"

"I did not deceive thee, then, Ru!" observed Jacques.

"I didn't say you did!" returned Ru; "but I've got something to tell you! You're going away to-morrow!"

"I knew I should not remain," remarked the spy; "but I cannot leave my father here, friend Ru! Without him I should scarcely think liberty a boon!"

"Liberty!" ejaculated Ru; "liberty! I didn't say anything about liberty! You're going to be sent to Vincennes!"

This announcement startled Jacques.

"How didst thou learn this?" asked he.

"I heard Corbé tell Monsieur de Joncas to send to the fortress for a strong escort, as soon as night fell! It'll be here by day-break, so I sha'n't have too much of your company!"

"If this is true," replied the spy, "'tis time I should act! Ru, I must not give them the chance of taking me hence! Dost thou understand?"

"No! not quite!" was the laconic response.

"Well, then, I will explain! Before to-morrow I expect that the King will send an order for my release; but I cannot leave my poor father behind, to die in this horrid den! Thou must lend me a hand to escape with him friend Ru! 'Tis in thy power to do it—"

"Yes!" retorted the other; "and be hanged for it! Thank ye."

"Dost thou refuse then, Ru?"

"What! to be hanged?" inquired the *porte-clefs*.

"To aid me!" responded Jacques.

"No!" answered Ru; "is this what you wanted me for?"

"It is! I have arranged the whole in my mind, and left as little to thee as I could!"

"Well! How are you going to do it?"

"At what hour dost thou go thy last round?" inquired Jacques.

"The proper hour is seven; but I'm not particular! I make it eight, sometimes! sometimes nine; sometimes ten; and sometimes I don't go round at all after dinner!"

"And at what hour is the night-watch set on the round-away?"

"At nine!"

"How many sentinels are there on the bridge that abuts upon the bastion?"

"One, besides the regular sentry in the *corps-de-garde*!"

"And how many on that part of the round-away which adjoins the bastion?"

"Two."

"'Twill be more difficult than I expected!" murmured Jacques; "is the bastion guarded?" continued he.

"No!" responded Ru, chuckling; "there's very little danger of any body climbing up the walls to get in here; and as for getting out over the bridge—yes! I should like 'em to try!"

"*I* intend to try, Ru!"

"*Do* you?" observed the latter.

"And thou must assist me Ru!"

"*Must* I! Well, *if* I must, of course I will! But how am I to keep clear of the halter?"

"That I leave to thine own cunning," answered Jacques.

"And the sentiels?" asked Ru.

"Them, too, I must leave to thy care," replied the spy; "had there been only one, or even a couple, I might have managed; but four!"

"A brace a piece!" ejaculated the other, sententiously.

"Now this is my plan, Ru," continued Jacques; "after the night-watch has been set on the round-away, thou must contrive, before thou comest here, to leave ajar the doors that open on to the bridge—the bridge that leads to the bastion I mean!"

"Go on!" exclaimed the *porté-clefs*; "I can do that!"

"To get rid of the sentinels," resumed the spy, "thou must take advantage of a fitting opportunity to ply them well with wine! canst thou accomplish this without exciting suspicion? for violence will not suit our turn!"

Ru remained a few moments silent, then burst out into one of his peculiar laughs which for some time prevented him from speaking:

"Leave 'em to me! leave 'em to me!" exclaimed he at last; "I'll make 'em a sly present of a bottle a-piece to keep them awake! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! They like wine, soldiers do; they won't forget to drink it."

"So far, then, we understand each other, friend Ru; the rest more immediately concerns thyself, for I must have thy keys! *Thee* I will lock in here!"

"My neck feels easy again," muttered the turnkey, chuckling; "but you've forgot that a sentinel always stands at the door above stairs when I come my rounds!"

"I must dispose of him, then," remarked Jacques; "I would not willingly resort to violence, but if 'tis necessary to insure my safety I shall not hesitate! Are we agreed as regards this point?"

"*I* shan't make much noise, if the sentinel doesn't!" returned Ru.

"Then I shall expect thee at the hour; bring with thee a piece of strong rope, long enough to reach from the bastion into the outer ditch; 'tis by that way I intend to escape!"

Ru promised to do as he was requested, and appeared mightily pleased with the projected stratagem, expressing his wish that it might succeed, and vowing everlasting friendship to Jacques, to whom, be it said, he really felt attached, though he might not have been able to define on what grounds his attachment was founded.

"There is one more favour I have to require of thee," continued Jacques, stopping the *porte-clefs* as he was on the point of departing; "thou must ask a question for me of Gertrude Leroux—Sister Bridget, I mean!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Ru.

"Thou must ask her what became of the portion of a gold coin that was suspended about the neck of the child she was entrusted with about one and twenty years ago!"

"Oh!" said Ru, again; "any thing more?"

"Nothing! only fail me not!"

"I could get a good deal for telling all this to the old one," observed Ru, after a pause, thrusting his head close into Jacques' face; "and you couldn't help yourself! But I *won't*, because I like you better than him or Corbé either, or any of 'em! I'll come, never fear! and I'll take care of the sentinels! I've got something by me 'll make 'em forget all about their duty and every thing else! ha! ha! ha! ha! It 'll be good fun! The old one 'll get into a scrape with Monseigneur, and I like that, because he gives it to Corbé then! they have famous quarrels sometimes I can tell you! I should like to set 'em fighting! But, I say, Monsieur Jacques; suppose the order came to-day for you to go; eh?"

"I have made up my mind to the course I should pursue, friend Ru!"

"Oh!" remarked the latter; "if it *should* come, you're sure to know!"

And with this he departed.

As soon as Ru was gone, Jacques once more turned his attention to his father, endeavouring to lead him into conversation; he spoke to him of past days, of his mother, of Beatrice, of himself, of his approaching liberation, but all in vain; the old man only clung closer to him, and wept, a subdued groan bursting from him as he muttered the words:—"*my son; my son; my dear Jacquot!*"

In spite of all the fortitude with which he had armed himself, Jacques found it a difficult task to bear up against the intensity of the various emotions that absorbed his mind, and as hour after hour waned, bringing him nearer to the moment of his projected attempt, he grew more and more anxious, and more alive to the dangers that awaited him, for the most trivial *contre-temps* might ruin his plans! With some satisfaction he perceived the gloom of his dungeon growing thicker, and as he received no summons to attend St. Marc, concluded that the order for his release had not arrived. Once he fancied he distinguished the fall of footsteps, and heard the doors of the tower shut to, but every thing immediately relapsed into silence, and he was left undisturbed. Overcome by cold, and long watching,

and mental fatigue, he reclined against the damp stones of his cell, and fell asleep with his father in his arms.

* * * * * * *

He was awakened by experiencing a sense of weight upon his chest; he started up in a sitting posture and found that his father had fallen forwards; he raised his head, but felt it drop again; the truth burst upon him all at once.

He was dead!

* * * * *

Ru was surprised when he entered the dungeon at the appointed hour to find that Jacques did not respond to his call; a glance satisfied him as to the cause of his silence; he looked at the body of the old man, and then at the spy, who sat motionless as a statue by its side, and going up to him, tendered him his hand; Jacques took it and pressed it in silence:

"I wonder he held out so long," said the *porte-clefs*; "every day I came I expected to find him dead! But 'tis all over now! What are you going to do?"

The spy drew his hand across his eyes, and checking a rising sob, asked "*if all was ready?*"

"I'm a little later than I said," replied Ru, "but I couldn't help it! You needn't be afraid of the sentinels; they're sound enough! I've just been to see! and I've thrown their bottles into the ditch! There's the rope!"

"Thy keys," observed Jacques.

"You won't have to use 'em," replied Ru, detaching them from his girdle and handing them to his friend; "I've left all the doors a jar! This little key belongs to the small gate that opens on to the bastion: leave it in, to show 'em how you got out!"

"And Bridget? hast thou seen her?" inquired the spy.

"Oh! I forgot!" answered Ru; "she didn't know what to say at first—"

"To the point, Ru; to the point! Time presses! What of the coin?"

"Well, she says she kept it," replied the *porte-clefs*; "'till that young girl—*you* know—"

"What! Julie de St. Auney?" asked Jacques.

"Yes! that's she! Before she was put in her coffin she hung the bit of gold about her neck! it was an idea of her's, you see! Bridget *has* ideas sometimes!"

Jacques made no remark, but a smile of satisfaction played about his mouth; for an instant he remained pensive, apparently collecting himself; Ru again broke silence.

"I've got something else to tell you," observed he; "the *calotte* went away to-day!"

"The *calotte!*" exclaimed the spy.

"Yes!" resumed Ru; "the Baron, I mean! All in a hurry too!"

"Indeed!" ejaculated Jacques, musingly; "strange! and *I* not to have been also summoned! But it little matters!"

"My time's up!" suggested the *porté-clefs*; if you're going to knock me down you'd better do it!" and notwithstanding the melancholy sight before him, he indulged in a loud chuckle.

Jacques said not another word, but enveloping his father's corpse in his large cloak, he laid upon it the coil of rope Ru had brought, and cautiously opened the doors of his cell; laying himself flat down, he listened a moment attentively; all was quiet! He then crept on his hands and knees until he reached the top of the stairs, where there were two more doors, opening, one inwards, the other outwards, upon the landing, and which Ru had purposely left open. Upright in the door-way of the tower, he now distinguished drawn in outline against the sky, the form of the soldier standing at ease, totally unsuspicious of danger. Jacques raised himself cautiously to his feet, and by a well-directed blow of his fist, brought the man to the earth, instantly grasping him by the throat to prevent his giving an alarm, though this was a useless precaution, for the poor fellow was at once rendered insensible by the violence of the blow. The spy dragged him down the stairs to the entrance of the dungeon, where he left him, motioning Ru to keep watch over him awhile. Taking his father's body in his arms, he carried it up to the door of the tower, and depositing his burden on the ground, returned to the cell to dispose of the sentry, whom he now laid upon the steps, Ru assisting him.

"Now Ru," said he, "thy turn!"

"Well, I wish you luck," observed the latter, "and that I mayn't get hanged! Good night! Mind you lock the door!"

Jacques shook him cordially by the hand, and as the *porte-clefs* re-entered the dungeon, his late prisoner turned the key upon him; as he rushed up the steps, Jacques stopped to lay his hand upon the soldier's heart, and felt relieved to find that although still insensible, the man breathed, and he hoped was not seriously injured; to lock the door of the landing was the work of a second; a minute more and he was in the great inner court.

The way to the bridge leading to the bastion, was through a passage between the *Comté and Trèsor* towers, the doors of which opened into this inner court; and to reach them, it was necessary first to traverse the latter in its entire width, immediately under the eye of the sentinel on duty at the inner wicket between the tower of the *Bazinirèe* and that of the *Comté*, who was, by his position, perfect master of the space that separated them.*

For a moment the spy hesitated; neither he nor Ru had thought of this, and discovery was infallible if he attempted to cross the court here; he was not long in deciding how to act.

Taking up his father's body in his arms, and drawing the cloak about him so as partially to conceal his own person, he crept along under the shadow of the wall connecting the *Bertaudière Tower* with the *Tower of Liberty*, in the direction of the bottom of the great court, successively passing the *Tower of the Well*, those of the *Corner*, of the

* For the localities, the Reader is referred to Part II. chapter IV. page 44.

Chapel, and of the *Comét*, and at length reached the point he sought in perfect safety, though he several times saw the vigilant guardian pass to and fro' within the wicket, as he gradually drew near the dangerous spot.

Ru had not deceived him; both doors were ajar; Jacques left the first as he found it, but took the precaution of locking the second, when he stopped awhile to breathe.

Between the remaining two doors, the one opening into the passage, the other upon the bridge, was a space that served as a *corps-de-garde*, always occupied by a sentinel; the spy peeped in, and to his great relief found the man still under the influence of the powerful narcotic Ru had introduced into his wine; he slipped by with his precious burden, and in a few moments found himself on the bridge.

This bridge, it will be remembered, crossed the great inner ditch from between the *Comté* and *Trèsor* towers, and abutted upon that portion of the round-away forming the inner boundary of the bastion, which latter was gained from this point by a few steps, and a small gate in the wall. To the right and to the left of this gate, and at about thirty paces from it, were posted two sentinels, one on each side, and a third midway upon the bridge itself, so that but for Ru's co-operation in rendering these insensible, it would have been perfectly impossible for Jacques to effect his escape undetected; even as it was the step was far from being unattended with extreme risk, since it was not unlikely that the fugitive might be observed by some of the other sentinels on the round-away, or that one of these, remarking a relaxation of vigilance on the part of their comrades, might be tempted to ascertain the cause, and finding them asleep, give an alarm. As it happened, however, Jacques crossed the bridge without accident, and had reached the small gate, when he heard the tramp of footsteps on the round-away and recognized the voice of Monsieur de Joncas, who was now going his rounds. He had not a moment to lose, and made good his retreat to the bastion as rapidly and as quietly as possible, locking the gate on the outer side, and leaving Ru's keys in the lock.

He soon had reason to congratulate himself upon his promptitude, for he had not reached the point of the bastion from which he purposed descending into the great outer ditch, than he heard a confused sound of many voices in the direction of the bridge, whence he inferred that the vigilant Major had discovered his subordinates asleep at their post; he was right; a few moments' delay would have proved fatal to his project.

Feeling himself now comparatively safe, for he knew that some time must elapse before the fact of his escape became known, he proceeded towards the mamelon of the bastion, and made fast his rope to the *chevaux-de-frize* which garnished it, as indeed the summit of the whole wall; with the body of his father across his shoulder, he then escaladed the defence, and in the course of a few minutes reached the bottom of the ditch, which, it will be remembered was a dry one; once here, he disengaged the rope by a jerk, and resuming his burden was soon beyond pursuit.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE LUTETIANS, BECOMING ALARMED FOR THE SAFETY OF THE EMPEROR, ADOPT A DESPERATE RESOLUTION CONCERNING HIM.

MEANWHILE, Democritus had strictly fulfilled the mission with which Jacques had charged him.

After awaiting the return of the latter until within two hours of night-fall, finding that his friend did not arrive, he cast off his mean attire, and dressing himself in a suitable manner, mounted horse and set out for Versailles in order to deliver the packet of papers into the hands of the King's Consort. A note, written previously to starting, with the word "*Spain*," appended to the foot of it, procured him a special audience, notwithstanding that the evening was advanced; this was all he wanted.

Madame de Maintenon recognized him instantly; he at once handed her the precious packet, informing her of Jacques' incarceration, and requesting, in his name, that she would exert her influence with the King to procure his immediate release, as also his signature to that of the Baron de St. Auney, to which D'Argenson's name was already attached. She promised to lay the whole affair before his Majesty within an hour from that time, and dismissed him with strong expressions of interest, and a hope that he would soon again appear at court.

With regard to Jacques she was as good as her word.

Early next morning, a messenger posted off from Versailles to the Bastile, bearing a sealed letter to Monsieur de St. Marc, enclosing D'Argenson's mandate for the *immediate* liberation of the BARON, signed by Louis, and a second mandate under the King's own hand, commanding the release of the spy within twenty-four hours; but St. Marc, aware that D'Argenson purposed removing Jacques to Vincennes, and conjecturing from what had transpired on the previous evening that he had strong reasons for keeping him in confinement, and anxious, moreover, to conciliate his favour, thought proper to withhold compliance with the latter document to the utmost limits of the time specified, by which course, keeping to the strict letter of his instructions, he screened himself against blame, and at the same time aided the views of the Lieutenant of Police, whom he expected to see in the course of the day, and whom he left to act as he judged fit.*

* It often occurred that a brief delay, accidental or wilful, entirely changed the ultimate fate of a captive, and that the order for his release, if procured under peculiar circumstances, was, in the interim, countermanded at the instance of an opposing party: cases numberless, many parallel with the following, might be quoted in exemplification.

With regard to the Baron, the order was peremptory, and the unfortunate nobleman was set at liberty in the course of the day, no answer being returned to his anxious inquiries after Julie, save that she was no longer a prisoner.

It was late before the philosopher rejoined his companions, whom he found in a state of great ferment, hazarding various conjectures as to the cause of their leader's absence, but he abstained from answering their questions upon this point, hoping that the morrow would bring Jacques again amongst them.

During the whole of the next day, the anxiety of the community increased, and has it had become known that the Emperor was last seen with Democritus, the latter could no longer withhold the intelligence they sought, nor indeed felt inclined to do so, having in turn grown alarmed for his friend's safety; still, he exhorted his companions to curb their impatience until the morrow, by which time the result of his Majesty's interference in their leader's behalf would be manifest; for though he could not account for the delay, he still entertained no suspicion of treachery on the part of St. Marc.

But hour after hour waned, and he came not; the impatience exhibited at first by restless looks, gradually broke out in a series of low murmurings intermingled with threats, which became general as night came on; at length, every individual voice breathed curses and menaces, Jean Bourliquet the smith, and his herculean comrade, Samson le Gros, taking a conspicuous part in the general disaffection.

"I say 'tis time to finish with the place," exclaimed the latter, petulantly, dashing down a goblet which he had just emptied of brandy.

"And so I say, Samson!" echoed Bourliquet.

"To be sure," cried half a dozen voices in chorus.

"Yes! down with the Bastile!" resumed Samson, striking his huge fist upon the table; "it has stood long enough!"

"Down with the Bastile! Down with it!" burst from every side.

"Don't be precipitate, friends!" interposed Democritus; "the step is one of great danger! Remember, the Bastile is well guarded!"

"Danger!" shouted Samson, leaping to his feet; "and isn't the Emperor in danger?"

"The Emperor for ever!" exclaimed a score of his companions, rallying round him.

"The Emperor for ever! Down with the Bastile!" cried Bour-

"A Madlle. d' Arblai, a young lady of distinguished parentage, having sought Louis XV. in order to beg her lover's release from the Bastile, in which he had been incarcerated through the intrigues of one Madame du Tremblay, her rival in his affections, and one of the King's mistresses, consented to purchase his liberty at a shameful sacrifice of herself. As she quitted the monarch's apartment, she met Madame du T., and imprudently exhibited the letter of emancipation; the consequence was that when she went to the Bastile the next day, she was informed by the Governor, that an order had just reached him commanding the young man's further detention during the King's pleasure, and cancelling the mandate for his release then in her possession. The unfortunate girl returned home and poisoned herself."—*Memoirs of the Regency and of the Court of Louis XV.*

liquet, baring his brawny arms; "curse the place! 'tis a disgrace to us, *men*, to let it stand!"

"Down with it, then! down with it!" again rose in one simultaneous cry.

"Who's safe, now-a-days?" asked another individual; "didn't they send my father there for saying bread was dear?"

"And mine," observed a second, "because he complained of the heavy taxes, and said that the King was badly advised!"

"Didn't St. Marc cheat me of my due!" shouted Samson; "and threaten me into the bargain?"

"Ah! And where's neighbour Poisson?" observed another; "isn't he in the cage? And hasn't grief killed his wife?"

"How many go in that never come out again alive?" remarked the first speaker.

"And how many more that never come out again alive or dead?" asked his comrade.

"Wasn't I obliged to hide myself like a thief, to escape being sent there," exclaimed a stripling of good exterior, habited like an artizan; "and what had I done? why, I struck down a noble who insulted my sister in the public street!"

"'Tis the nobles who've done all!" echoed half a dozen different speakers.

"The nobles!" shouted Bourliquet; "yes! they think that the people are only slaves! that they're of different flesh and blood! that they're only fit to work for *them*!"

"Why don't they equalize our rights?" demanded another, interrupting the smith.

"Ah! why?" echoed the mass.

"Why has my elder brother more right to be rich than I have?" observed a young fellow dressed in fashionable attire, much decayed; "it's the fault of the laws! doesn't the Emperor himself say so?"

"The Emperor for ever!" shouted all.

"Down with the laws!" muttered some half dozen.

"We won't have the law of primogeniture!" exclaimed more!

"Down with the Bastile!" shouted all.

"If the Bastile were *down*," cried one from the middle of a group that had up to this moment been engaged in close conference, "we shouldn't be much benefited that I can see; but that's no reason why we shouldn't deliver the Emperor! What say you, comrades? Shall we go?"

"*En avant!*" was the unanimous response; "save the Emperor!"

"And I'll lead you on," exclaimed Samson; "the sooner we go the better!"

Democritus once more interposed, to stay his fierce comrades from committing an act pregnant with such imminent consequences; many, indeed most of them, were inflamed with drink, and even whilst plotting their mischief, continued to indulge in deep potations, so that he feared they would, if unsuccessful in their meditated attack, be guilty of the grossest excesses, and bring ruin upon themselves; perhaps involve a discovery of the secret that held them ;

his authority, however, went unheeded, the few words he attempted to utter being received with loud murmurs of disapprobation.

"I tell thee, comrade," said Bourliquet to him, as the uproar subsided, "that we are resolved!"

"You disobey the Emperor," shouted Democritus.

"No! no!" retorted the majority.

"I say, yes!" resumed Democritus, gathering energy from opposition; "are we not all pledged not to take any step without his concurrence?"

"How can he advise us when he is not here?" asked one.

"Isn't it to release him that we go?" remarked another.

"But don't I tell you all that His Majesty himself is interested in his safety?" exclaimed the philosopher again; "even *now* he may be at liberty, and on his way to us!"

"Wilt thou answer for his life?" asked Bourliquet.

Democritus, in spite of his desire to restrain his companions from any act of violence, could not quell his fears respecting Jacques, and unable to reply to this direct question, hesitated; Bourliquet, who was narrowly watching him, resumed:

"Thou art afraid to say yes, comrade! Besides, if we *did* promise never to act without the Emperor's orders, he didn't expect we should wait for them when he was in danger! He has never abandoned us, and by all the saints, if nobody else goes, Jean Bourliquet will go alone!"

"No! no!" was the general cry.

"No! not alone!" said Samson, placing his hand upon the smith's shoulder; "I will accompany thee!"

"We'll all go!" shouted the multitude.

"Well, comrades," observed Democritus, no longer able to resist the enthusiasm that prevailed; "it shall never be said of me that I abandoned my friends, when my arm or my advice could avail them! Since you are determined upon making this attempt, I will be of the party! *En avant*, then and Lutetia for ever!"

"Bravo! Bravo! Down with the Bastile! The Emperor for ever!" resounded through the vaults, as the motley groups dispersed in various directions, in search of arms and implements of destruction.

As soon as they were re-united, Democritus, who now took the lead, called silence for the purpose of determining their plan of operations, but was almost immediately interrupted by Samson, otherwise Hercules, who, armed with his formidable club shod with iron, and brandishing it as he advanced, exclaimed:

"What's the use of so many words! Don't I know every foot of the ground, and can't you all be content to follow me? This is my plan, and here's my comrade Bourliquet to help me out with it! It won't do for us to knock at the great gate, that's certain—though it would be more polite to do so. We must scale the wall of the bastion, and break in by the doors at the end of the bridge; Bourliquet's hammer and this—" here he whirled his formidable weapon over his head with fearful velocity—"will do quite as well as keys!"

"I think thy plan a good one, friend Hercules," observed Democritus, "but we must not leave all to thy prowess! Whilst thou and thy party scale the wall on the river side, I will escalade it at the opposite point, and Vulcan can lead a third party to the mamelon. I will attract the attention of the sentinels to my party, so as to leave thee and Vulcan free. The sentinels on the round-away we can easily dispose of."

"We've all forgotten one point," suggested the sagacious smith; "in what part of the fortress is the Emperor?"

This was a pozer, which, of course, remained unanswered; Bourliquet smiled and resumed:

"When once we're *in*," said he, "I and my party will make for the great draw-bridge, and cut off the communication with the guard-houses, by preventing the garrison from lowering it! Then somebody must find out the Governor; he'll tell us where the Emperor is!"

"Leave the old fox to *me*!" shouted Samson, shouldering his club; "I'll hunt him out! I know the way to his chamber! I'll cure him of the night-mare if he happens to have it!"

This facetious sally caused some merriment; when it subsided, Democritus again addressed his companions:

"What we do," remarked he, "we must do as silently as possible; we have the night in our favour, and the security in which our adversaries fancy themselves; expecting no attack of this nature, they will be unprepared, and in the confusion we must do our work! 'Tis now nearly half-past eleven! What say you to attacking at midnight?"

"Agreed! Agreed!" was the general reply.

"Good!" continued he; "then let us away at once!"

"The Emperor for ever! Lutetia for ever! Down with the Bastile!" shouted Hercules.

"The Emperor for ever! Down with the Bastile!" responded his comrades.

"Let those who intend to follow *me*," resumed the philosopher, "rally round me; and so of our comrades Vulcan and Hercules. We have no time to lose!"

With the greatest promptitude, the men formed into three distinct groups around their respective leaders, some armed with muskets, some with swords, others only with long knives or daggers, whilst others again, unable to procure arms, had provided themselves with axes, and formidable iron-bars, Bourliquet wielding his ponderous sledge-hammer, and Samson his iron-shod club; in the midst of the confusion that reigned, the murmur of voices, the clang of arms, and the shuffling of feet, Jacques suddenly appeared amongst them, pale, haggard, and exhausted.

A dead silence all at once prevailed, as if by magic all had been struck dumb and motionless, but the next moment, one simultaneous cry burst forth, each vying with the other which should shout loudest! "the Emperor for ever!"

By a motion of his hand, Jacques silenced the tumult, and having

signed for one of them to bring a bench, he laid the corpse upon it, drawing off the cloth that covered it, so that the emaciated frame was exposed to their wondering gaze; burying his face in his hands, he gave a convulsive sob, and sunk down by its side.

Respect for the grief he manifested checked any observation on the part of his companions, and a few minutes passed without a word being said, though many were the glances and ominous the whispers exchanged; at length Democritus poured out a tumbler of wine, which he amply qualified with brandy, and handed it to him; the spy thanked him with a faint smile, and drank off the liquor.

"Comrades," said he, returning the vessel, "I have escaped a great danger. I Thank Heaven I am once more amongst you!"

"The Emperor for ever!" shouted they.

"I have just escaped from the Bastile," shouted the spy.

"Didn't I say they wouldn't let him out!" observed Hercules; "down with the Bastile! We are ready! Down with it!"

"Aye! aye! Down with it! Down with the Bastile!" echoed from a score of voices.

The cry was immediately taken up, and resounded through the halls for several minutes, increased and prolonged by the clash of weapons and the loud threats of the parties that had ranged themselves under Bourliquet and Samson, both of whom gesticulated in the most violent manner, apparently striving to excite their companions to the very highest pitch.

In the midst of it, Jacques started to his feet, and for the first time perceived they were armed; he did not attempt to quell the tumult by either word or sign, but looked from one to the other in astonishment; they who stood nearest him, and could catch a glimpse of the displeasure marked in his countenance, lowered their eyes and became instantly mute, the contagion spreading from one to the other until all were hushed: with perfect calmness, the spy gazed upon the turbulent mass, and in a firm voice, said:

"What is the meaning of this outbreak?"

Bourliquet and his huge friend stepped forwards from the centre of their respective band, to explain, but Democritus, who stood nearest to Jacques, forestalled their intention, and in a very few words informed the spy of all that had occurred.

"Yes," added Bourliquet, as soon as the former came to an end; "'tis every word true. We were all going!"

"But I am now again amongst you, my friends," observed Jacques; "what more do you want?"

"Down with the Bastile!" shouted some twenty or thirty.

"And who amongst you will say so, if I forbid it?" asked Jacques.

A murmur of disaffection was heard, accompanied by angry gestures; the spy affected not to remark either, and continued:

"When the hour has come, I will lead you on! Yes, the Bastile must fall—nay it shall fall—but we must bide the time!"

"When is it to come?" asked Samson, petulantly; "we've waited for it long enough!"

"Aren't things going worse every day?" suggested another.

"Isn't my brother in there now?" observed a third.

"And my father?" exclaimed a fourth.

"Yes! yes!" cried Jacques, elevating his voice; "I know you have grievances to redress; I know that oppression like this should not be; but I repeat it, the moment is not come; *the pear is not yet ripe.*"

Another murmur of disapproval, louder and more continuous than the first, arose, but Jacques soon quelled it, by an imperative gesture.

"You are wrong," shouted he; "but you err through ignorance! Answer me; did I ever mislead or deceive you?"

"No! no! The Emperor for ever! Lutetia for ever!" was the unanimous response.

"Are not your interests mine?" continued Jacques, warming; "and have we not, all of us, individual motives for remaining true to the general cause? Without *me*, would you exist in the security I have placed you? How many of you, victims of the vilest oppression, would now be pining in the loathesome atmosphere of a dungeon of the Bastile? Would your parents, your relatives, your friends, enjoy the blessings of liberty, in a land where despotism holds full sway, but for the secret means we have at command to protect them? Who then talks of endangering those means, is a traitor to himself, a traitor to Lutetia, and an enemy of mine!"

"No! no! The Emperor for ever! Julian for ever! Lutetia for ever!" responded to this indirect accusation; "there are no traitors amongst us!"

"No!" returned the spy; "none that would for any consideration of wealth or other advantage betray a comrade or betray Lutetia; yet are you all agreed to take a step by which you will infallibly endanger the safety of our community, and destroy the fraction of liberty you enjoy! And what is this but treachery, although you would yourselves be its first victims! Did not I unite you to accomplish great purposes? Are not we virtually the rulers of this great city? for can we not, at any time, counteract the evil designs of the minions of the court, or of the law, and set at defiance all efforts to trace us? And is there one of you would barter this great privilege to gratify his thirst after revenge? Poor revenge too, after all! Like you I cry, *down with the Bastile!* but I alone must give the word to march against *it*! When the hour comes I will give it! I must be obeyed I tell you! I will watch over your interests, and over the safety of this community, with the most jealous eye, but one murmur from your lips shall be a signal to me that you no longer place dependence on me! One course alone will then remain to me! You know me!"

"You were in danger," sullenly exclaimed Hercules, shouldering his club; "that's why we were going to attack the Bastile."

"I know your hearts," rejoined Jacques, "your fears for my safety overcame your better judgment, and *that* once excited,

you were no longer masters of yourselves! I thank you, comrades! But listen awhile! Were we now to march against the Bastile, and destroy it, another would rise up in its stead! Is there not Vincennes? Vincennes with its dungeon and *oubliettes!* Is there not the Temple? Another prison not less horrible! These did not spring from the ground like poisonous mushrooms, spontaneously; they were begotten by the spirit of oppression upon despotism, and when we march, 'tis not against the Bastile *only* we must march, but against *Despotism* that engendered it! I grant you we could take the Bastile, and raze it to the ground, but would that annihilate the laws that crush the people our brethren! Yes! Let us strike, comrades; but let us strike at the root of the evil! Now, we should obtain no response from without! Oppression has brutalized our fellow-citizens; they are like slaves, and daring not, *care* not to think, and fear to act! But a day will come when they *will* think! To-day they would regard us only as disturbers of the public peace; when *that* day comes, they will join issue with us, and add their strength to our's; then, then only one spirit will animate us all; only one cry will be heard; down with the Bastile! down with Despotism! Liberty for ever!"

A shout of approbation rent the halls, and some time elapsed before it was sufficiently subdued for the spy to continue:

"I feel that the people will do this," said he, "because I am one of the people, and feel as they do! Oppression has its limits; once it over-steps them it becomes its own destroyer! Like you, I too have wrongs to revenge, and if I preach forbearance to you, I will set you the example of practising it! Did I listen to the dictates of my resentment, this night would I lead you on to destroy the object of general detestation and fear, the Bastile! But no! I have a grander object to attain, and with you to second me, we shall attain it! I mean the affranchisement of our fellow-citizens from the yoke of slavery! Oh, could you only see my heart; you would see the grief that is written there! I have suffered much since I saw you; but you shall judge for yourselves, and then say, if you can, that forbearance costs me nothing. Look at this corpse, comrades. I escaped with it, carried it in my arms from my cell hither! That old man was three-score! twenty-five years of his existence were passed in the dungeon of the ditch of the Bastile! Look at *him*, and look at me! Twenty-five years ago, he was even as I am; his stature as tall, his limbs as sinewy; his gait as erect as any here, his eye as bright, his heart as bold! A villain thrust him into that den of infamy. For five and twenty years, cut off as if dead, from all he loved, from the wife of his bosom and from his children, he saw no light, breathed no air; his food bread, his drink water; a stone his bed, straw his pillow, filth of all kinds surrounded him; rats and vermin were his companions, nauseous reptiles fed upon *his* food! No voice heard he, but his jailer's, nor human form but *his* saw he! Despair replaced grief in his heart! Little by little his strength wasted; his sinews shrunk to threads; his blood turned cold; his limbs became para-

lized; his very marrow dried up; his eyes too lost their fire, and soon vision itself left them; even his tongue grew powerless; at last his intellect became extinguished! Comrades, that old man was my father!"

A suppressed murmur of anger ran through the assemblage, accompanied by ill-suppressed threats, whilst many a fierce countenance worked more fiercely still under the influence of the passions that their leader's narrative had suddenly rekindled; his wrongs were their's, his griefs, his vengeances, and had he then proposed to lead them into the most perilous enterprize, heart and soul they would have followed him; his own emotion, however, though intense beyond description, he overcame before they did their's, and again addressed them:

"Yes, friends! *my* father; to seek whose grave I came to Paris now about ten years ago! Here, amongst you, shall he be buried! Here, where we nightly assemble, will I erect a cross to his memory! And here, over his dead body and by his sufferings during his long imprisonment do I swear, solemnly, never to rest until I have accomplished the liberation of our fellow-citizens, and the downfall of Despotism! But here too, and now, must you swear, one and all, that me you will implicitly obey, nor seek at any time, under whatever circumstances, to carry out, without my full concurrence, the project you this night entertained! When the time is come I will be your leader; I myself will first cry, *down with the Bastile!* Do you consent to this!"

"We do! we do!" was the unanimous reply.

"Then swear it!" replied Jacques.

By a simultaneous movement every hand was suddenly elevated, and a deep murmur, as if one voice only had spoken, resounded through that dark vault.

"We swear! we swear!"

"I am satisfied," resumed Jacques, "and reiterate my vow to you! Put away those weapons, and retire! I would be alone!"

In obedience to his wishes, his companions slowly departed, not even Democritus attempting to interrupt the moody silence into which he suddenly fell; when the dead quietude that reigned apprized him that he was alone, the curb that the spy had hitherto placed upon his feelings gave way, and bursting into a convulsive flood of tears, he fell forwards on the dead body, uttering:

"My father! My poor old father!"

* * * * * * * * * *

The next night, at twelve, the old man was interred in the middle of the great hall, Father Simon having consecrated the spot, and performed the last sad duties to the dead; as soon as he had retired, Jacques, having placed a small wooden cross over the grave, renewed the vow he had made to his companions on the previous night, and they took his pledge of fidelity and obedience in return.

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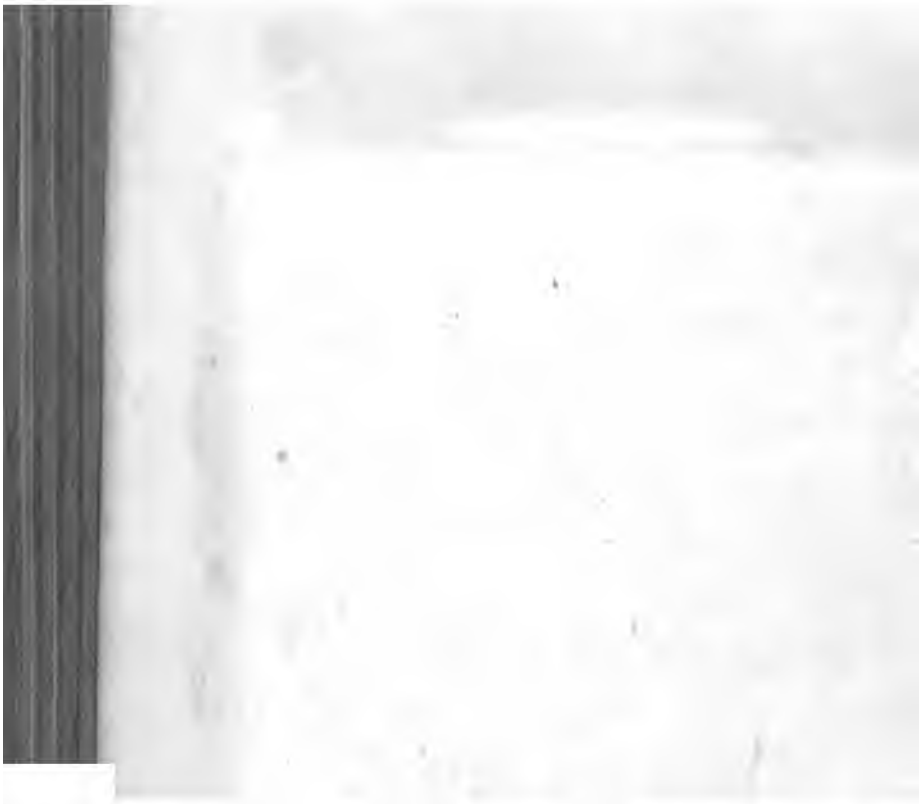
The oath of the Lutetians.

LONDON: T. C. NEWBY, 72 MORTIMER STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.



CHAPTER LVII.

THE LAST INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE DUKE OF CHARTRES AND BEATRICE.

On the morning of the second day after these occurrences, the Duke de Chartres received an intimation from Jacques, that Beatrice was dying, and wished to see him; although their last interview had prepared him for the event, the intelligence shocked him excessively, and in conformity with the instructions contained in the letter, he immediately prepared to follow the messenger who had brought it, to Lutetia.

The man conducted him straight to Michaulx's the cooper, who, it will be remembered, lived in the *Rue de la Harpe*, his dwelling forming one of the secret entrances to the *Palais des Thermes*: the duke had muffled himself up in a large cloak to prevent his being recognized, a precaution recommended by the spy, who received him on his arrival, and led him in silence to Beatrice's chamber.

How the Prince's heart smote him as he approached that chamber of death! How pale and how attenuated should he find that form he had so loved, and but a few months since, seen blooming with health and beauty! And he was her destroyer! She had sent for him again; but wherefore? was it that he should see her die? was it to forgive him the wrong that he had inflicted on her, or with her last breath to invoke a malison on his head? or again was it to recommend to his care, the babe that still nestled close to the heart whose pulses even now were ceasing? Conjecture was at fault!

As the spy thrust open the door, D'Orleans heard the soft tones of a female engaged in solemn prayer! He started! the voice was not that of Beatrice! Jacques motioned him to enter! The duke obeyed; Beatrice lay apparently dead, with her infant in her arms. On one side of the bed stood a capuchin-friar, holding a crucifix to the moribond, and on the other, knelt Julie de St. Auney! Beatrice had just received the last consolation religion could afford her!

Believing Julie to be still in the Bastile, D'Orleans was startled to meet with her here, engaged too in such an office, but conjecturing that she had been released through the mysterious agency of the spy, his surprise degenerated into a feeling of shame at finding himself once more in her presence, and he hesitated whether to advance or retire; the powerful motive, however, that had brought him to that place, overcame every other sentiment, and as Julie arose, having completed

her pious task, he stepped forwards to take her place by the side of the dying girl; Julie recognized him; her countenance changed, and she became slightly troubled, but almost immediately recovering her self-possession, she resumed her charitable, self-imposed duties towards Beatrice.

That the drug administered to Julie by Ru was not deadly, but merely a powerful narcotic, has already been surmised by the Reader.

Finding it impossible to procure her release through the intercessions of Madame de Maintenon, for the reasons already mentioned, and fearing some violence to her on the part of D'Argenson, whose motives for detaining her a prisoner he knew to be infamous, Jacques imparted his suspicions to Ru, whom he prevailed upon to aid him in snatching her from the dreadful fate that awaited her, should the latter have cause to believe those suspicions founded; the result is known, and little more remains to be told.

A few hours had sufficed to restore the poor girl to consciousness; when she was made acquainted with the happy truth that she was free, she fell on her knees and thanked her deliverer in the most grateful terms, readily consenting to remain where she was, upon learning that it was necessary to her safety she should abstain awhile from re-joining her sister, with whose retreat Jacques made her acquainted, satisfying her likewise as to the fate of her father, and assuring her that although he had suffered much, he would shortly be set at liberty, and placed entirely beyond the fear of further persecution at the hands of his enemy.

Having for the time being taken up her abode in Lutetia, the kind-hearted maiden volunteered to tend Beatrice, with whose sufferings she soon sympathized, and whom she essayed to console by every means in her power; Beatrice instinctively clung to one, young like herself, and already acquainted with grief; and under her soothing care, her mind, hitherto wandering, gradually recovered a more healthy tone, though her bodily strength diminished more and more, until she could no longer conceal from herself the rapid approach of her last hour: as she felt the crisis at hand, she besought Jacques to send for the Duke.

Absorbed in the fulfilment of her religious duties, Beatrice did not perceive the Duke until he drew up to the bed-side, when a faint smile illumined her countenance, and extending her hand, even now clammy and cold, she exclaimed:

"Thank Heaven thou art come!"

"Oh, Beatrice," ejaculated the Duke, in a half suffocated tone, "can'st thou forgive me?"

"I can, Philippe; I can;" responded the dying girl; "for do I not myself hope to be forgiven! I have sinned, grievously sinned, and for a time despair held possession of my heart; but this holy man has sown hope where despair was; I am again penitent! Thank him, Philippe, thank him; for he has saved my soul!"

The Duke extended his hand to Father Simon—for it was he—and pressed his in silence; Beatrice continued:

"And this young girl, Philippe; she too has consoled me! Ah, she also has known grief, and can feel for sorrows like mine! Could I hope to live, I would call her sister; but, no; I must die; she shall be my sister in heaven, where I will pray for her, and for thee too, my brother—" she now turned towards Jacques—"oh, that I could have seen our father before he died! But—'tis past—"

For a few seconds her strength seemed to forsake her, but Julie administered a restorative to her, and she resumed in a solemn tone, taking her lover's hand between both her own, and gazing steadfastly into his face whilst she spoke:

"Philippe," said she, "I sent for thee, to make one last request, which thou must not refuse? This child is our's! He will live to call thee father; he will live to be a man, and pride shall make him walk erect! They will speak to him of his mother, and then his cheek shall burn, for shame will be in his heart; this must not be, Philippe; hearest thou? Dost comprehend me?"

"Speak, Beatrice, speak!" sobbed the Duke; "what would'st thou have me do?"

"Do!" replied she; "can's't thou ask me? Do, said'st thou? Well; I will tell thee! I shall not live many minutes, but there is time, yet! There is a holy priest to join our hands, and here my brother as a witness! Do not refuse me, Philippe! 'Tis for thy son's sake I ask it, not for mine! Give him a name, an honorable name, and I will bless thee!"

"Oh, Beatrice," gasped D'Orleans, "thou knowest not what thou askest! What, what shall I say to thee?"

"Nay Philippe, refuse me not! From the day we first met, thou didst call thyself Philippe, but thou didst never tell me whom thou wert! I sought not to penetrate thy secret, for I was happy in thy love! Once only I spoke to thee of marriage: thou rememberest when! thou didst promise to answer me on the morrow, but that morrow never came for me! I was abandoned to my shame! Now, Philippe, I am dying; I can be thy wife only for a few short minutes, but—but the bond will save our child from ignominy and scorn. Let the holy father bless us, and I shall die happy! Thou consentest, dost thou not?"

"Would that it were possible, Beatrice," exclaimed the agonized Prince; "but 'tis out of my power! Oh, I have wronged thee more cruelly than thou suspectest! I never told thee my rank, for I dreaded to lose thee! But fear not for our son! He shall not blush for his parentage! The blood of the Bourbon flows in his veins, and like his father, he shall bear the name of D'Orleans!"

A dead silence ensued; Beatrice was so overcome she lacked power to give utterance to the words that hung upon her lips, and gazed fixedly at the Duke with eyes already glazed. Suddenly, however,

as if she had collected her last remaining strength for the effort, she raised herself on her pillow, and said:

"Who then can'st *thou* be that art the father of my child? Philippe D'Orleans!"

"Duke of Chartres" exclaimed he, interrupting her; "and now, Beatrice, thou knowest why I cannot give thee my hand in marriage!"

"Oh, Philippe," ejaculated she, the tears streaming from her eyes, "dost thou then despise me? Thy rank will not confer on me life to share it with thee, but grant me my last request! Thou didst not think me beneath thy love, and dost thou now hesitate to sanctify it? Oh, Philippe, 'tis for thy son I ask this boon! Thy hand; thy hand—"

"Beatrice, Beatrice," rejoined D'Orleans, in a frenzied tone, "I cannot!—I am already betrothed! I am married!" and in an agony of grief he sunk into a chair by the side of her.

One moment's silence, a stifled sob, a slight groan, and Beatrice fell back into the arms of Julie.

"Highness, she is dead," gasped Jacques; "you have killed her."

But Beatrice again opened her eyes:

"Jacques! brother," said she, almost inarticulately, "'tis the end! Let me embrace thee! My child! thou wilt watch over him! Julie, my friend, thy hand; and thou, father, bless—"

She said no more: her voice suddenly became extinguished, her bosom ceased to heave, her eyes, for a moment supernaturally bright, fixed themselves upon the Duke, then all at once stood motionless in their sockets; the light had faded from them; her head fell backwards upon Julie's shoulder, and all was over.

In a low voice, Father Simon commenced reciting the prayers for the dead.

As he concluded the ritual, D'Orleans started to his feet.

"What a fatal: y, what a fatality!" exclaimed he; "but, Jacques, thou hast forgiven me! Let me kiss my son!"

The spy had taken up the infant, which smiled in his face, and held out its little hands, as if to caress him; D'Orleans embraced the child as he lay in Jacques's arms, and with the tears flowing down his cheeks, said:

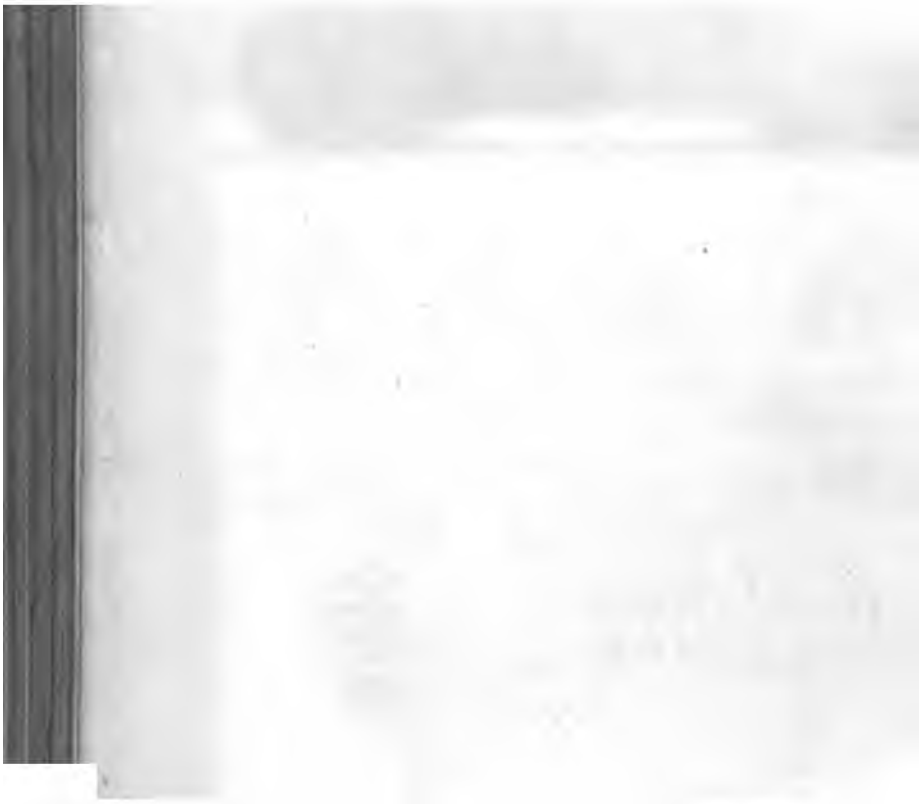
"Yes! I will take care of his future welfare! He shall bear the name of D'Orleans!"

"He shall bear his mother's name," retorted Jacques, proudly; "for *that* he will never have to blush! The child remains with me, Highness!"

"Thou would'st not rob me of this consolation, Jacques," observed the Duke, faltering as he spoke.

"I have said it, Highness," was the reply. Jacques now gave the infant to Julie, adding; "thou hast seen the last of Beatrice! Let us hence!"

The spy's tone and manner were so peremptory, and there was in his air something so imposing and determined, that D'Orleans found



not courage to oppose him, or even to reply; taking up the cold hand of his victim, he raised it to his lips, and tore himself away, respectfully saluting, as he turned to quit the chamber, both Julie and Father Simon.

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That night the old man's grave was re-opened to receive the remains of his child.

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CHAPTER LVIII.

THE CHEVALIER DE MONT FLEURI IMPARTS AN INTERESTING PIECE OF INTELLIGENCE TO THE MARQUISE DE BEAUVAIS.

From this scene, we must now transport thee, Reader, to one far different; to one where elegance and luxury reign supreme; to one of those delightfully mysterious little nooks styled *boudoirs*, the stronghold of the wealthy fair, in which they love to take refuge and dream of happiness present, or of happiness to come, or perhaps of happiness past; or where, unobserved, save by some discreet attendant, they can weep over a disappointment, or plan deliberate revenge against their rivals for empire over the gay coteries in which they flutter away their butterfly existences; to one of these, and one of the most sumptuous, come with us.

The Marquise de Beauvais—it is of her we would speak—resided in the *Rue Notre Dame des Champs*, in one of the very prettiest *maisonettes* of the whole *Faubourg St. Germain*.

It was of light Gothic architecture, and seated on an artificial knoll in the midst of a small park boasting some of the finest teils, elms, and horse-chesnut-trees possible to be seen, the house itself being surrounded by an extensive flower-garden with a shrubbery and a conservatory annexed. It had been built expressly for her at a vast expense, by her late husband, and adorned both externally and internally with every adjunct that art could furnish, Nature having done very little for it in the former respect, and certainly nothing in the latter; from its

extreme beauty it was, not inaptly, called "*Le beau Sejour*," and formed a fitting residence for its fair proprietress.

Her *boudoir* overlooked the shrubbery and the lawn beyond, which latter had the appearance of a rich velvet carpet, so green was it and so smooth, not a blade of grass growing out of its place; the view was bounded by clumps of the large trees already mentioned, concealing the tall walls which encircled the park, and deceiving the eye, so that seated at her window she could, although almost in the heart of a large city, fancy herself in one of her solitary *châteaux* in Normandy or in Picardy, retaining the consolation of being still within the precincts of the Court.

The apartment itself was one of those exquisite specimens of architectural ingenuity that are easier conceived than described, simply because no portraiture can do them justice. In the decoration of it, the Marchioness had been allowed to follow the bent of her own inclinations and taste, which she had let run riot without once sinning against the rules of elegance.

It was a lofty room, of octagonal form, the ceiling forming a dome, on which was painted, in fresco, the Court of Juno in Olympus; on the walls, the loves and pastimes of the Arcadian shepherds and shepherdesses were represented, in a series of panels relieved by a small gold beading richly carved, with here and there at certain intervals, wreaths of flowers, and garlands, and clusters of fruit, the ground-work of the walls themselves being a dead white.

The two windows looking out upon the shrubbery and lawn, as aforesaid, were nearly concealed beneath a rich drapery of light blue velvet trimmed with silver lace; immediately facing them was an alcove, before which, curtains of the same material similarly trimmed could be drawn at pleasure so as to hide the luxurious couch within it; ornaments of every description met the eye withersoever it wandered, comprising porcelain vases and figures of the most elaborate workmanship, exquisitely chased silver sconces of various designs, busts and statuettes, curiously fashioned cabinets, jewel-cases, and work-boxes, and an assortment of nick-nacks tastefully arranged on marble tables, with an abundance of freshly culled flowers throwing out their rich perfume; such was the *boudoir* of Elise, Marquise de Beauvais, and here the Reader must picture her to his imagination, seated at the window, making up a nosegay of violets to adorn her own fair bosom, previously to taking her morning exercise on horseback.

As she executed her graceful task, she hummed over a lively air, occasionally beating time with her foot, when her female attendant entered and announced a visiter.

"So early! exclaimed the Marquise; "who is it, Eugènie?'

"A cavalier, Madame,' responded the latter with a tantalizing smile.

"But who? who?" resumed her mistress.

"Whom should it be, Madame, but the Chevalier?" asked the attendant; "the Chevalier de Mont-Fleuri! Shall I say you are not at home, Madame?"

"Yes! to every-body else, Eugènie! Tell Monsieur le Chevalier to come."

The attendant withdrew.

"Whatever brings *him?*" soliloquized the Marchioness; "so early too! and I not dressed! Never mind," she continued, as she fastened her bouquet into her riding-habit, and hastily arranged her beautiful tresses around her face, at the same time eyeing herself in a pochye; "that will do! I even think I look very killing to-day!" and as she now heard his footsteps on the stairs, she cast another hurried glance at herself, and to conceal a flush that incarnadined her cheek, began patting and caressing a favorite spaniel, which had slipped in with Eugènie, unperceived.

"Monsieur le Chevalier de Mont-Fleuri," said the soubrette, ushering in our old friend Democritus, dressed according to the elegant fashion of the period.

"Your very devoted servant, Madame la Marquise," exclaimed he, bowing as he entered.

The attendant retired.

"Your's, Monsieur le Chevalier," replied the Marchioness, dropping him a low curtsy; and she burst out into a ringing laugh, as she added; "how extremely formal we are! As times go, we could not be more so were we—"

"Married to each other," suggested the Chevalier, interrupting her.

"Have it so, if you will," replied she, smiling, and slightly blushing; "but Heaven forbid we should ever be on such familiar terms."

"Amen!" responded our hero with affected gravity.

"May I know what brings you, Chevalier?" asked the lady, sinking gracefully into a chair by the window, and pointing to another opposite to her, intimative of her desire to see him seated.

"Can you ask me, Elise?" replied the Chevalier, fixing his eyes upon her really beautiful face.

"Always gallant, always complimentary," was the rejoinder, the fair speaker pouting coquettishly to display the cherry-redness of her lips; "but I have no time, or rather, little inclination to listen to the evaporations of your fancy; for the morning is too fine to lose, and I was just going out riding; so say what you have to say and let me go."

"If you are in a very great hurry," said the young man, with a view to contradict her, "I will not detain you; I will even accompany you, for my horse is at the door, and what I have to say I can say to you as well any where else as here."

"It must be something very important, notwithstanding, Chevalier, or you would not have been so early a visiter; it wants yet an hour or more of noon, and I must confess, *you* are the last person I expected to see!"

"Did you not, Elise, at our last interview, accord me the privilege of the early entry?"

"True, my dear Chevalier, but since then you have never shewn your face here, and I consider this breach of friendship tantamount to a forfeiture of all the privileges I intended that my condescension should confer upon you! You are the veriest chevalier-errant living! For an entire twelvemonth you disappeared from court, Heaven knows whither, breaking innumerable hearts and causing countless marriages —for you were a general favorite—then all of a sudden re-appeared in the most extraordinary manner, dressed—well we won't say how—and after renewing our ancient intimacy, you again disappear most mysteriously, for more than one entire month, leaving me quite forlorn and disconsolate! Now what do you deserve? What punishment do you not merit? Come, Sir, give me an account of your actions since we last met!"

"The punishment would be your's if I did, Elise, for I should have to confess that from that time until now, I have never once thought of you"

The Marchioness, accustomed to his raillery, burst into a loud laugh as she responded.

"Ah, well, I cannot be angry with you for that, I so seldom think of you! Indeed, had you never returned I should have entirely forgotten that such a person had ever existed!"

"This is what I wished, Elise, for at our last interview I fancied you betrayed decided symptoms of returning the attachment to me that I once professed I felt towards you; had this been the case, I must have taken greater precautions in breaking to you the news of my approaching marriage!"

This time the lovely Marchioness did *not* laugh; she slightly started, so slightly, it was only not imperceptible; she also turned the least trifle paler, echoing the Chevalier's words in a tone of breathless astonishment, adding:

"Are you serious, Chevalier?"

"I am, Madame!" replied he; "but you are surely unwell!"

"Yes—no! that is yes—I am a little faint," rejoined she, striving to appear composed; "the odour of these violets is too powerful!" and with this she snatched the nosegay from her bosom, and threw it petulantly upon the ground, adding; "I shall be better directly."

Our ancient friend pretended not to observe this outbreak of temper, and paused while she had recourse to a small phial of aromatized salts to conceal her agitation.

"And so you are going to be married!" exclaimed she at last, in some measure recovered.

The philosopher inclined his head affirmatively.

"Is it a fair question to inquire the name of the happy lady?" resumed the Marchioness.

"The question is fair enough, Madame la Marqnise, but I cannot answer it! The alliance is as yet, only on the *tapis*, wherefore it would be imprudent to mention names! The circumstance, however, I could *not* make up my mind to keep secret from so old a friend as

you, whom I once sincerely loved! But you shall be made acquainted with her name; aye, and with her too, in due time! Indeed you would confer a personal favour on *me*, if you would condescend to officiate as bride's-maid on the occasion! The young woman is an orphan, and would feel much flattered by the distinction, I will answer for it!"

"Oh, certainly," responded the Marchioness, with forced animation; "if the young lady should not prefer one of her own friends! When is the nuptial benediction to be given?"

"I do not quite know myself, but I will take care that you be apprized in time, my dear Marchioness! You are somewhat surprised at my taking this step, are you not?"

"You are altogether an enigma to me, Chevalier!" answered she with trepidation, gazing at him with swimming eyes; "your language to me on the night of the Masque—for I may now speak plainly—induced me to believe that our old intimacy was not forgotten, and our subsequent interviews confirmed this impression! I may, then, well feel surprised at this announcement!"

"This from *you*, Elise! You surely attached no importance to the badinage that you refer to! I did not! And as for our former intimacy, it was not of a nature to cause *you* any regret when it ceased, since you were the cause of its being broken off, nor can I, for this reason, conceive that you experienced any gratification when chance brought us again so unexpectedly together!"

"But have you not often since expressed a wish that we should again renew that intimacy, Chevalier? And for what motive? I cannot fathom you!"

"Am I then indeed to believe, Elise, that the renewal of our former intercourse gave you pleasure? That I was fortunate enough to inspire in you, sentiments, that not long since you laughed at when I professed them for you? Is this true?"

"Believe me or not, Chevalier," answered the Marchioness, ingenuously, "or call it a weakness if you will, but I do confess, nor feel humiliated in confessing, that I did find a secret pleasure in seeing you upon the same terms as formerly! Nay, since I am in the confessional, I will even admit that your retirement from court caused me grief; more than this, know that I would have recalled you, had your abode not remained so profound a secret, for I did believe you sincere in your professions! I have, however, lived to find that you are like the common herd! a set of vain, flirting triflers, who having secured a woman's affection, laugh at her, and chuckle in their sleeve at the facility of their conquest—"

"Elise—" interrupted the Chevalier, reproachfully.

"Nay, hear me out," resumed she, warming as she spoke; "although I have avowed the existence of a silly passion to you, from whom, of all others, I ought to have concealed it, and although I have indulged in false hopes, do not think that my weakness shall carry me further! You shall never have it in your power to exult

over what you may deem a triumph! You have trifled with my feelings, and I shall know how to resent the injury!"

"And did you not trifle with mine, too, Elise?" rejoined our hero; "I loved you ardently, passionately, and you gave me every proof that my love was reciprocated! Oh, you cannot know with what eagerness I watched for those glances which you denied to others: with what raptures I listened to your voice, or to the echo of your footsteps; how one stray smile would repay me for days of intense torture; how my bosom burned when I saw you; how my heart leaped when our hands touched, and with what ecstacy I used to gaze upon your lovely countenance! all this you cannot know! yet all this I felt! And with what reception did I meet, when I ventured to declare my passion? Ask yourself, Elise, and with justice reproach *me* if you can! You are a coquette, and love to inflict tortures like those I have experienced, upon all who are fascinated by your peerless charms! With some men, you might trifle with impunity; with others, with those who love for the first time, such deception is futal! Your's well nigh drove me mad, but I determined to overcome my weakness, and have succeeded, though the struggle has been a long and a severe one!"

"And is the blame all to *me*, Sieur Chevalier?" retorted the Marchioness, wiping the tears from her eyes; "is there then in your vocabulary no such thing as an excuse for coquetry?"

"None, Madame; none!"

"You are in error, Chevalier! Coquetry is to a handsome woman, aye, or even to a homely one, her best safe-guard against the vapid triflers who ever flutter in the circle of which she is the centre! Poor moths around a flaming taper! Does not a woman require some kind of shield to protect her against the assaults of this tribe of gnats? And what shield is there for her so invulnerable as coquetry? Because she amuses herself at their expense, is she to be condemned as utterly insensible to worth in the sex, when it is to be found? as totally incapable of appreciating sincerity? If coquetry exists in us, 'tis because you men are, for the most part, a race of selfish, vain, dissipated coxcombs, giving women credit for nothing save fickleness and an insatiable love of adulation, and having formed your estimate of them from isolated examples, judge all, in the aggregate, by the same standard."

"With such powers of discrimination, Elise, I feel less inclined to pardon you for the sufferings you caused me to undergo, for you surely did not confound *me* with the herd of flatterers to whom you allude!"

"Vanity again," retorted the Marchioness, with a contemptuous laugh; "why, now, should I exempt *you* from the general stigma? Have you not, by your present conduct, given me cause, just cause, to include you?"

"Did you not set *me* the example, Madame?"

"And could you, Chevalier, follow an example which upon principle you condemn? I gave you credit for more consistency."

"But did you not Elise, cruelly trifle with me?"

"Well, Chevalier, I confess I was to blame. But I repented of my error as soon as it was committed; nay, had you only returned to me—I—I should have asked your forgiveness, as I do now. Assure me that you bear me no animosity, and let remembrance of the past be buried in oblivion. Indeed, indeed I am very unhappy!"

Unable longer to contend against the violence of her emotions, the beautiful young widow burst into a convulsive flood of tears, which were checked only by the pressure of the Chevalier's hand upon her's:

"You love me, then, Elise?" said he, in a soft tone of voice.

She paused a moment ere she answered, when with brightening eyes half-closed, and heaving bosom, and a face suffused with modest blushes, she said:

"Why should I now deny it? Did I do so, you would not believe me, and my avowal may be some slight atonement for my former error towards you. *You* have subdued the passion *you* once felt for *me*; a similar task remains to me to accomplish. Believe me, I shall strive my uttermost to eradicate it. But I feel that you, Chevalier, have adopted this mode of revenging yourself upon me. Why did you renew your visits until within the last month, giving me assurances of your sentiments being unchanged, if not to elicit from me a tacit acknowledgment that I returned them? and having assured yourself of this, contract a marriage which you knew must cause me a painful disappointment?"

"There is no lack of aspirants to your hand, Madame," retorted the Chevalier, seeming to take pleasure in increasing her anguish; "I know of at least a dozen!"

"Go on!" ejaculated she, sobbing with vexation.

"Well, then," resumed he, "I do not deny the truth of your surmises. From the day on which you so thoughtlessly trampled upon a heart that was devoted to you alone, and that even now for a time beats in unison with your own, I say that from that day I vowed to be revenged upon you, Madame. I did not anticipate the pleasure of meeting you at the masque, but having met you, resolved to make the most of the opportunity to renew a suit I never intended should lead but to the end I had pre-determined to attain. I perceived that you were pleased with my attentions, and pressed for permission to see you on the morrow, which you granted. I *did* renew my former protestations, as you have truly said; you thought them sincere, and responded accordingly. I left Paris for a few days, and on my return, sought you again, and again, and again, each time to reap more certain convictions as to the state of your heart, whilst my own remained as cold as was your's when you scorned my love. I quitted you with a promise to come on the morrow. I broke my word, for that day I determined to fulfil my vow and take a partner for life, who could love *me* as

once I loved *you*. Since then, a month or more has passed, and the marriage is so far settled that on this day week the contract will be drawn up. I could no longer delay enjoying my triumph—call it an ignoble one if you will, still 'tis one *I* rejoice in—and came to announce this intelligence to you myself, that I might—"

"Enough! enough! Monsieur le Chevalier," interrupted the Marchioness; "though I deserve all this, I will not hear more. You have acted an unworthy, ungenerous part, and shamefully abused my confidence. I have made you a promise which I will keep. Until that day let me hear no more from you, nor see you. I have the honour to wish you a very good morning!"

So saying the Marchioness arose with great dignity, and making her visiter a formal reverence, glided majestically out of her boudoir into an adjoining apartment.

Democritus took up his beaver, and nowise disconcerted, coolly withdrew, muttering to himself:

"Now I am even with her!"

He was scarcely gone than Eugènie was summoned to her mistress' chamber:

"I shall not go out this morning, Eugènie;" said she to the *soubrette*, looking another way as she spoke in order that the latter might not see she had been weeping, "and should any visiters come, deny me to them."

"Oh! I am rightly served," continued she to herself, burying her face in her hands, and sobbing afresh, as the girl closed the door; "I deserve it all—all! but I did not believe him so cruel—so ungenerous! Married, 'tis impossible!"

CHAPTER LIX.

IN WHICH RU MAKES A DISCLOSURE TO THE LIEUTENANT OF POLICE; AND HIS LAST APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC.

THE course of events carries us back to the Bastile, early on the morning following Jacques' escape.

In the Council-chamber were assembled Monseigneur D'Argenson, Monsieur de St. Marc, Corbé, Monsieur de Joncas, a subaltern, the four delinquent sentinels, guarded by a competent picket of their comrades, the soldier whom Jacques left shut up in the tower of the Bertaudière, and lastly Ru, apart from the rest, scowling upon the judicial group with an air of dogged defiance.

At the table were seated D'Argenson and the Governor, behind whom stood Corbé, Monsieur de Joncas being engaged in detailing the occurrences of the previous night, and the circumstances which had led to their discovering the escape of the two prisoners from the dungeon of the ditch.

Fearful were the workings of the sombre countenance of the Lieutenant of Police as he listened to the Major's recital, and dark the frown that he directed upon the delinquents; when the Major came to an end he inquired whether either of the parties had been questioned.

"Monseigneur," replied de Joncas, "they were too much overcome to give any account of themselves, so I let them sleep in the black-hole until your arrival!"

"Well, varlets," exclaimed the Lieutenant of Police, addressing the sentinels, "how can you justify yourselves against this charge? *Morbleu!* Things are come to a pretty pass!"

The four unlucky wretches, not even now quite recovered from the effects of the drug, looked at one another with a stupid, muddled air, encouraging one another to speak; at last one of them, making the military salute, took two steps in advance of his comrades, and addressing their judge, said:

"Monseigneur, we're all old soldiers, and have served his Majesty ever since he made his first campaign! We could'nt have gone so sound asleep unless—unless—." The soldier hesitated.

"Unless, unless," reiterated D'Argenson, mimicking the speaker; "unless what? *Sang dieu!*"

"Well, Monseigneur, 'tis of no use concealing anything now;" rejoined the other; "we may as well be shot for telling all the truth as half of it! The fact is, Monseigneur, that we must have been drunk!"

"Drunk, ye knaves!" shouted the Lieutenant of Police; "*tonnerre*

dieu ! Why this is worse and worse! And this is thy justification? So if the whole garrison chose to get drunk, the *château* might take care of itself! But how got ye drunk? And when? And with what? Ye must have caroused famously at supper, *morbleu !*"

The soldier did not reply, for besides that he could not wholly exonerate himself or his comrades by confessing the share Ru had had in their delinquency, he entertained no suspicion of the trick this individual had played off upon them, whilst his sense of honor revolted at the idea of compromising *a friend*, though by so doing he might in some measure have exculpated himself and his brothers in misfortune, from a share of the blame attached to their offence, and perhaps even caused the same to be visited by a lighter punishment than that which now stared them in the face; still, conscious that the rebuke was unmerited, as of the sacrifice he was making, his military pride betrayed itself, in spite of his silence, by an involuntary gesture, sufficiently marked to excite the notice of D'Argenson, who, accustomed to analyze human character, at once attributed this slight change in the soldier's deportment to its true cause, and with his usual penetration fixed upon the really guilty party, his suspicions having been already directed towards him by the circumstances of the case as narrated by de Joncas; these, however he kept to himself, and after waiting a few moments for the soldier's answer, exclaimed, with impatience:

"And so thou refusest to reply?"

The soldier shrugged up his shoulders, but remained mute; notwithstanding, he cast a look of peculiar significancy upon Ru, which was instantly detected by D'Argenson; perceiving this, the *porte-clefs* fixing his eyes upon the latter, muttered:

"Oh, I give him leave! Let him tell if he likes! *I* don't care! Go on!" added he, turning half round to the sentinel.

"Thou hearest!" observed the Lieutenant of Police to the latter, remarking his hesitation.

"Since Ru gives me leave, Monseigneur," resumed the soldier, "of course I will tell how it was! But then we needn't have drunk it all!"

"Go on, fool!" growled D'Argenson.

"Then, Monseigneur," rejoined the other, "you must know that about an hour or better before supper-time last night, Ru came into the canteen where I and my comrades were drinking a *petit-verre*! We got talking, and whilst we were talking, in comes our captain to tell us we were to mount guard on the roundaway after supper! After the captain was gone, Ru says to me, 'thou'lt have a cold hour's work of it to-night, comrade!' Yes, says I; it isn't over amusing! But I sha'n't feel it much, because I shall be on duty in the *corps-de-garde* of the bridge! With that Ru asked me if I would play him at piquet for a bottle of wine, just by way of passing the time! Willingly, says I, so down we sat, and Ru lost! 'I won't play with thee any more,' says he, 'but I'll try my luck with either of thy comrades!' All wanted to play, and it was agreed at last that Ru should give each a turn a-piece for a bottle of wine! But

the luck was against him, and he lost to all! By this 'twas time to go to supper, so Ru promised he would give us our bottle before we mounted guard; it would keep us awake he said, and we should give him his revenge to-day! When we were at supper, he took an opportunity of giving us the wine, which we concealed in our pocket, and that's how it all happened!"

D'Argenson listened attentively to the soldier's story, and mused awhile after he had brought it to an end, next interrogating the sentinel who was found shut up with Ru in the tower; his recital was brief and circumstantial; he only remembered receiving a sudden and violent blow, and finding himself, on recovering his consciousness, shut up between the doors of the dungeon-stairs, where he had remained until released by Monseiur de Joncas.

"And what hast *thou* to say, Maitre Ru?" continued the Lieutenant of Police, addressing the *porte-clefs*.

"Why, that after being knocked down I'm likely to get hanged for not dying outright," retorted the latter. "I went to take the prisoners their supper, when Jacques told me the old man was dead!"

"Dead! say'st thou?" ejaculated D'Argenson, starting, for this news surprised and pleased him.

"Yes; dead!" retorted the imperturbable jailer; "aren't you glad of it? *I* should think you *are*, if what I've heard him say is true!"

The Lieutenant of Police turned pale, and became visibly troubled; making an attempt, however, to disguise his embarrassment, he impatiently ejaculated:

"The man was mad!"

"*Was* he?" continued Ru, staring intently at his interrogator; "I think I ought to know! He was'nt mad five and twenty years ago, and then he said you and a notary of the name of Quinault—"

"Peace, fool!" shouted D'Argenson, trembling with rage and vexation, for he little expected this *exposé*; "what care I for the ravings of a maniac. Go on with thy story; what happened thee in the dungeon?"

"Why," retorted Ru, "when I went to look at the old man, Jacques knocked me down, and when I got up again he was gone, and so were my keys! That's my story, and that's all I've got to say!"

In spite of the plausibility of the *porte-clefs'* account of this part of the transaction, D'Argenson was too shrewd to be deceived thereby; he felt relieved that the old man was dead, but could ill suppress his anger at the escape of the spy, whose person he had deemed perfectly secure, but whom, as the Bastile was full, he had determined to cast into one of the *oubliettes* of the fortress of Vincennes,*

* This word *oubliette* is derived from the Latin *oblivia*, whence the French verb *oublier*, to forget. An *oubliette* was a deep dungeon of triangular form, dug into the ground, the walls whereof were of stone; the top was also of stone, forming a trap-door, upon which the prisoner was purposely made to step, and which opening beneath his feet, suddenly consigned him to a lingering death, without a possibility of his escaping from his horrid fate.

Cardinal de Richelieu had two *oubliettes* in his *hôtel*; the Archbishop's Palace also contained two, and there were others in the Temple.

How many victims were *forgotten* in these frightful dens is a secret that will never be revealed!

and there keep him until he should divulge the name of the party to whose care he had consigned the fatal papers obtained from Quinault: his rage may be conceived when he arrived at the Bastile that morning for the express purpose of conveying him away, and learnt the news of his escape.

"By the blood of all the holy saints," exclaimed he as Ru ended, "but thou art a cunning knave! Darest thou swear that thou didst not connive at this man's escape?"

"If I did," retorted Ru, unmoved, "it isn't likely I should tell you? What should I get by it?"

"Insolent!" vociferated D'Argenson; "dost *thou* beard me too? Thou shalt be hanged like a dog unless thou dost instantly confess the truth!"

"And shan't I be hanged all the same if I do?" retorted the other; "ugh!"

D'Argenson started to his feet in a fury, but almost immediately re-seated himself, as if struck by some sudden thought.

"Sieur Governor," said he after a momentary pause, and addressing St. Marc; "two prisoners have within the last three months effected their escape from the *château*; on the last occasion I was induced to pass over the negligence of the sentinels, but by St. Marc, I must now make an example of these to teach the rest vigilance! March those four men into the inner court, *Monsieur le Major* and shoot them!"

De Joncas raised his hand to his head, in token of obedience, when he who had officiated as spokesman advanced a step nearer D'Argenson, emboldened by the imploring looks of his comrades:

"Monseigneur," said he, "we deserve our fate, for, d'ye see, a good soldier never sleeps at his post! But we are old servants of his Majesty's—"

"Pah!" interrupted D'Argenson, brutally; "art thou afraid to die?"

The soldier who stood in a supplicating posture, suddenly raised himself erect, and for a moment looked the Lieutenant of Police full in the face, his bronzed cheek, on which was a deep scar, turning to the colour of mahogany; there was no mistaking the expression of his countenance, and D'Argenson, unable to return his gaze, averted his eyes; without saying a word, the soldier wheeled proudly round and fell back in the same rank as his comrades with whom he shook hands.

At this moment Ru, who had been an apparently abstracted observer, stepped up to the table, and thus drew upon him the attention of the Lieutenant of Police:

"What are they going to be shot for?" asked he in his usual abrupt manner, at the same time extending his hands towards the condemned sentinels; "if 'tis for going to sleep on duty, you'd better shoot me! *I did* it!"

"Did *what?*" asked D'Argenson.

"I drugged the wine on purpose!" resumed Ru; "Jacques is my friend!"

The whole truth flashed at once upon the mind of all, a general exclamation of astonishment following this unexpected announcement.

"Traitor!" ejaculated D'Argenson; "what could induce thee to commit such an act?"

Without the least respect for forms, Ru drew close up to the Lieutenant of Police and whispered in his ear; the effect was magical; his eyes suddenly glistened with delight, and he involuntarily bent them upon St. Marc, a singular expression of malice pervading his features; he then arose, and left the chamber, the *porte-clefs* leading the way.

As he disappeared through the door-way, St. Marc quitted his seat for the purpose of following him, but D'Argenson peremptorily bade him remain, a command with which the Governor reluctantly complied, exchanging uneasy glances with his nephew.

Not more than two minutes elapsed before the Lieutenant of Police re-entered; he was alone.

"*Monsieur le Major*," said he, speaking to de Joncas, "those soldiers are at liberty! You may think yourselves fortunate," continued he, addressing them, "in escaping with your lives, for which you may thank Ru! But, *tonnerre dieu!* if any thing of this sort occur again, not fifty Rus, though you were ever so innocent, should save you! Go!"

Monsieur de Joncas bowed, and immediately withdrew, leaving D'Argenson alone with St. Marc and Corbé, the former resuming his place at the table.

Before St. Marc lay the Great Register of the Bastile in which the names of the various prisoners were inscribed, together with the date of their incarceration and of their liberation; the Lieutenant of Police began turning over the leaves in an abstracted manner, when his eye became suddenly fixed upon one of the columns, and turning sharply round to the Governor, he exclaimed with unfeigned astonishment, frowning as he spoke:

"How is this, Sieur Governor! The Baron de St. Auney at liberty?"

"Yes, Monseigneur," answered the Governor; "he was set at liberty yesterday."

"Why didst thou not announce this to me before? *Mort dieu!*"

"Monseigneur was too much occupied to afford me an opportunity," was the response.

"And by whose command was he liberated, Sieur St. Marc? He was the King's prisoner!"

"I had the King's warrant for his immediate release, Monseigneur, signed by yourself! Here it is!"

And St. Marc handed the document to him.

"Confusion!" exclaimed D'Argenson, recognizing the paper Jacques had extorted from him at Quinault's; "how could this have reached the King?"

"I had no alternative, Monseigneur, but to obey," resumed St. Marc; "the same messenger brought this letter also; commanding me to set Jacques at liberty within twenty four hours!"

D'Argenson snatched the paper from his hand and hastily glanced his eye over its contents; he appeared annihilated, and sinking into

the chair he had recently quitted, buried his face in his hands, plunged in thought.

"I am lost!" mused he to himself, "lost entirely unless I can counteract this stroke of ill-fortune! if those papers are in the King's hands, I am ruined!"

He remained thus several minutes, when he suddenly started up, muttering:

"A good thought! This secret of Ru's has come in opportunely, *morbleu!*"

Turning abruptly round to St. Marc he now addressed him:

"Sieur Governor," said he, "some two months ago, having occasion for a few thousand crowns, I requested thee to lend me the sum I needed!"

"You did, Monseigneur," replied the Governor, turning somewhat pale.

The Lieutenant of Police continued:

"And thou didst tell me, that thou hadst not the money!"

"The sum was large, Monseigneur, fifty thousand crowns;" stammered St. Marc; "I much regretted my inability to supply you with it!"

A pause ensued particularly embarrassing to the Governor, upon whom D'Argenson kept his eyes steadily fixed, a smile of incredulity playing about his mouth:

"Yes!" retorted the latter, sneeringly; "thou *didst* regret it much indeed; yet was it not the *ability* but the *will* that was wanting! Thou didst lie, Sieur Governor!"

The blood rushed into St. Marc's shrivelled cheeks, then again fled from them; he looked at D'Argenson with amazement, and from him to his nephew, who was scarcely less agitated than himself, whilst the former exulting in their embarrassment, chuckled audibly:

"Thou must now give me five hundred thousand crowns," continued he.

"Monseigneur!" stammered the Governor, astounded at the exorbitant demand.

"To-morrow, at noon," resumed D'Argenson, "I shall send for the money under proper escort!"

"But Monseigneur," exclaimed St. Marc again; "by what right do you demand this of me?"

"By the best of all rights, Sieur Governor! The right of the strongest!"

"But this is infamous, Monseigneur; 'tis an extortion!"

"Have a care Sieur St. Marc," rejoined the Lieutenant of Police; "dost think I know not of *thy* extortions also? And knowing of them, thinkest thou I winked at them without a hope of one day turning the circumstance to account? Grind thy prisoners if thou wilt, and as much as thou wilt; that regards me not; but when I need assistance I shall look to thee for it! Thou must give me the sum I ask, or it may be worse for thee! I can bring charges against thee thou wouldst find it difficult to set aside! The prisoners who

have lately escaped for instance; who shall say 'twas not *thy* fault if *I* choose to assert that it was? And then I ask thee what thy life would be worth! Come, Sieur Governor! Let us understand each other and remain friends! When I last requested a loan of thee and thou didst plead poverty, I believed thee; or what amounts to the same, I chose to believe thee! Now 'tis different! But thou shalt not find me ungrateful!"

"But, Monseigneur, I owe you nothing," remonstrated St. Marc, petulantly.

"That signifies nothing," retorted the other, unmoved.

"I cannot give you so large a sum, Monseigneur! I do not possess it!"

"Then, Sieur Governor," resumed D'Argenson, "I must remind thee of a certain closet in yonder wall, which I have good reason to know is well lined with broad gold pieces! Nay, if thou art still incredulous, I will even show thee how to come at them! Or if thou art altogether ignorant of the existence of this treasure, I must infer that it belonged to some of thy predecessors, in which case the whole falls of right to his Most Christian Majesty!"

We leave the Reader to picture to himself the effect this unexpected communication produced upon St. Marc and Corbé, and the exultation of D'Argenson at the success of his manœuvre; for some moments they remained mute and motionless as statues, when the Lieutenant of Police once more broke silence:

"Well, Sieur St. Marc," said he; "thou wilt give me this money, eh?"

"Yes, Monseigneur; yes!" replied the other, huskily; "you shall have it!"

D'Argenson smiled, and inclined his head.

"Then by to-morrow, at noon," observed he, "let it be ready! I have most urgent occasion for it!" and bidding the worthy pair good day, he abruptly departed.

"Uncle!" exclaimed Corbé, as soon as D'Argenson was fairly gone.

"Nephew!" ejaculated St. Marc in reply.

"This is Ru's work!" continued the nephew.

"It is!" chimed in the uncle.

"We must be revenged, uncle!"

"We *must*, nephew!"

"We *will* be revenged, uncle!"

"We will, nephew!"

"We have spoken of this before," resumed Corbé; "Ru knows too much, and has known too much for a long while! We are not safe!"

"We are not," remarked the Governor; "but how did he obtain possession of our secret?"

"Dost recollect that night, uncle, when Jacques—"

"I do! I do, Corbé! 'Twas he must have told Ru! Yet, how? for since then the spring has been altered!"

"No matter, uncle; our secret is known, and we are cheated! We will be revenged!"

"We *will*," echoed St. Marc again.

Corbé extended his hand to the Governor who tendered him his

in return, and exchanging a significant squeeze, they commenced a conversation of which we will give only the sequel.

* * * * * * * *

More than a week had elapsed since the foregoing colloquy took place between St. Marc and Corbé.

It was a dark, bleak night, and the wind furiously buffeted the grim towers of the Bastile, moaning and groaning through the battlements, like the wailings of a thousand evil spirits; the sky was surcharged with heavy clouds, and a drizzling, uncomfortable haze fell, half frozen and mixed with hail, which drifting from every quarter, accumulated in compact masses on the platform, to the great annoyance of the sentinels, rendering their walk dangerous and disagreeable in the extreme, causing them to look wistfully at their boxes, with many a loud curse against the pitiless storm, and still more against the not less pitiless *consigne* that forbade them to take even a moment's shelter from its fury.

It was indeed one of those nights, on which, to employ a popular locution, it would have been uncharitable to turn out a dog; nevertheless, besides the sentinels on duty on that platform, and braving wind, and hail, and sleet, and rain, and cold, might have been seen a man crouched down behind a heap of large stones, like some beast of prey lying in wait for its victim: that man was Corbé.

For some length of time previously, be it said, the whole of this portion of the fortress, being in a dilapidated state, had been undergoing thorough repair, more especially that angle of it comprising the Towers of Liberty and of the Well, and their connecting masonry,* the former having sustained material damage from lightning some few months before,† which damage Samson le Gros had been called in to render secure for the winter, it being the intention of the authorities to reconstruct the platform itself, as soon as the weather would allow the masons to proceed with their work. Every precaution was taken, notwithstanding, for guarding the same, as usual, whilst in order to cut off all communication between the sentinels and the workmen, the entire space above mentioned was enclosed by means of a strong bulwark of sheathing raised at the two extremities of the space shut in, planks being laid down cross-wise upon pieces of timber jammed into the masonry, so as to allow the sentinels to pass from one angle to the other, these being withdrawn at night after Corbé had gone his last rounds.

The latter had been in his hiding-place already some time, and was growing impatient at the non-arrival of the individual he expected, when he suddenly heard the sentinel on duty over the Bertaudière tower challenge somebody.

"'Tis he," muttered he, and once more crouched down behind the large stone.

Meanwhile, the person alluded to, having given the pass-word,

* *Vide* Bird's-eye View of the Bastile, Part ii.
† *Vide* Part vi. Chapter xviii.

Corbes revenge.

advanced toward the spot where Corbé lay hidden, and had already stept his foot on the plank, when he exclaimed, speaking to himself:

"I don't half like it! I won't go!" and he began hallooing out, "Monsieur Corbé, Monsieur Corbe," at the very top of his voice.

This individual was Ru.

The wretch heard him perfectly well, for Ru was to windward of him, but he answered not.

"A plague take the old one, and his message too," growled Ru, advancing cautiously a step or two upon the plank, and pressing it downwards with his foot to try if it was steady.

All of a sudden he stopped short, stood still for a moment, then peeped over into the court beneath, over which he now stood at an elevation of more than ninety feet.

"Can't see," muttered he, "but 'tis a good way down to the bottom! I owe him a grudge; he struck me once! I've a good mind to—" here he paused in his soliloquy, then a moment or two after resumed—"I *will*," said he; "nobody'll know it! they'll think he fell over accidentally! It'll be good revenge!"

During this brief interval, Corbé was watching him with the greatest eagerness, inwardly cursing him for his hesitation:

"The wretch!" growled he, setting his teeth hard together; "he nearly broke my arm!"

Ru now again began to progress across the plank, steadying himself as well as he could by stooping, for the wind several times nearly threw him off his balance; he was within a few feet of the opposite side when there was a loud crack, and with a sudden jerk the plank gave way beneath him; he clutched at it as he fell, and succeeded in grasping it, but his weight was too much; for a second or two he remained poised and struggling in the air, clinging to the treacherous deal with a tenacity that belongs only to the drowning man who is catching at a straw, but his struggles only served to hasten his fate; the next moment he had disappeared.

There ensued a dead pause of a few seconds, then a heavy, dead, smashing sound!

He had fallen into the court-yard beneath, where he was dashed to pieces upon the stones!

Corbé saw him go, and thrust his head forwards over the battlements, not to see, for it was too dark, but to *hear!*

"Curse him," said he, as the horrid crash smote his ear; "he nearly broke my arm! He robbed me of my money! But I'm revenged now!"

* * * * * * * *

A few years after, Corbé himself perished near the same spot. He was looking over the low parapet into the court-yard beneath, when his foot slipped, causing him to over-balance himself, and he was precipitated headlong down. He *lived* two days after this awful catastrophe, and before he died, confessed to Father Riquelet the mode in which he had, with the connivance of his uncle, revenged their joint grievances upon the unfortunate Ru.

CHAPTER LX.

OF THE RIOT THAT TOOK PLACE AT MAÎTRE CHOPIN'S.

NOTWITHSTANDING the energy of D'Argenson's character, and the skilfulness with which, when foiled in his projects, he oftentimes converted a defeat into a victory by taking opportune advantage of some oversight on the part of his opponents, his recent discomfitures completely overwhelmed him, for he knew that Jacques, already a most formidable antagonist, now possessed the means of bringing him to public shame, and besides having strong personal motives for seeking retaliation, would be doubtless further excited thereto by a natural desire to revenge the wrongs of his father.

The peculiar circumstances under which the spy and the Baron de St. Auney's release had been procured, satisfied him that the former had, through some extraordinary channel, succeeded in securing the highest influence in his favor, and he trembled as he reflected upon the consequences likely to ensue, in the event of the fatal documents which Jacques had obtained from Quinault falling into the King's hands, anticipating nothing less, daily, than to receive a *lettre-de-cachet* consigning him to the dreary abode which had proved the grave of so many victims.

But three entire days passed without his forebodings being fulfilled; four days; a week; a fortnight! Still he remained unmolested! His courage gradually returned, and taking himself severely to task for allowing his fears for once to get the better of his judgment, he resolved to profit by the first opportunity that should offer, and ascertain how far his safety was compromised.

Meanwhile, he redoubled his exertions to procure a clue to the hiding-place of Father Simon.

Acting upon the information he received from his various emissaries, he established a cordon of observation, which from being originally wide enough to comprise every point where Father Simon, or Jacques, or sundry other persons upon whom his suspicions rested had been seen, became gradually concentrated in and about the immediate neighbourhood of the Rue de la Harpe, until, finally, Maitre Michaulx's cooperage and Chopin's *cabaret* were completely beleagured, so that but for one circumstance, the safety of the Lutetian commonalty would have been fatally compromised.

The boy Germain, upon receiving the largess of the Lieutenant of Police, had repaired to Maitre Chopin's for the purpose of changing his gold pieces, which led to a long colloquy between them; for the worthy vintner, surprised to see the boy in possession of so much money, narrowly questioned him to elicit how he obtained it.

Chopin, be it said, had been a kind friend to the boy's family, and the boy himself was of an ingenuous character, besides which his suspicions had been aroused by D'Argenson's inquiries; his conscience too, smote him for playing the spy upon one who had done him a kindness, and unable to resist the natural impulse of a grateful heart, he candidly confessed the whole truth.

The whole of this conversation being duly reported to Jacques, he was not long in taking his precautions, and these were so admirably carried out that, in spite of their vigilance, the Lieutenant's emissaries found themselves effectually baffled, the whole amount of their information tending to prove only that the cooper seemed to keep a great many men constantly employed, that Maitre Chopin had an extraordinary number of customers, and that Jacques had been several times seen at the latter establishment: of Father Simon, however, they could gain not the slightest intelligence.

But D'Argenson's suspicions being once excited, were not so easily set aside; besides, recent occurrences had tended to confirm them; hence the domiciliary visit with which Michaulx was favored one day when he might have been supposed least to expect it, but for which, thanks to a friendly hint from Germain, through the medium of Chopin, he was perfectly prepared: D'Argenson withdrew disappointed.

A few mornings after, Germain entered Chopin's *cabaret* in great haste, and in a tone of extreme alarm bade him "*hide himself, for the soldiers were coming.*"

Chopin shrugged his shoulders, whispered a word to an individual who stood by him behind the counter, and continued washing up and rinsing his measures and glasses, whilst Germain hurried home.

Within a quarter of an hour after, a large body of soldiers, headed by the Lieutenant of Police in person, drew up in front of the *Cep-de-Vigne*, forming in a line across the street so as to bar the passage.

Entering the *cabaret* with two officers and four soldiers, D'Argenson pointed to the vintner, exclaiming:

"That is he! Arrest him!"

The soldiers advanced to do their superior's bidding, when the vintner suddenly dropped a strong bar across the small wicket behind which he was ensconced, and stopt their futrher progress:

"Pray, Monseigneur," said he, "of what crime am I accused?"

"Arrest him, I say! *Mort dieu*!" shouted D'Argenson, not heeding the question, and applying his shoulder to the door, he essayed to break in: his efforts, however, were unavailing, and he was compelled to desist.

The men looked at one another much embarrassed.

"In the name of the King," exclaimed D'Argenson, "I command thee to deliver thyself up!"

"Honor to his Majesty and respect to the laws!" observed Chopin, "but I am in my own house, and have a *right* to know why my dwelling is invaded! I am a free citizen——"

"Thou art a traitor," retorted D'Argenson; "thou harbourest traitors! I arrest thee as such! Soldiers, force that door!"

"Stay!" exclaimed Chopin; "I am only one against half a dozen, but if violence is used I will not answer for the consequences! I have a right to see your warranty for arresting me!"

"Fool!" growled D'Argenson; "thou wilt repent this insolence! Force that door, ye hounds," continued he, addressing his men.

Chopin seized a large wooden pitcher full of wine, and as the soldiers were breaking in the wicket, dashed the liquid full into their faces; blinded and half smothered they immediately fell back, Chopin making good his retreat into the little parlour.

D'Argenson was on the point of rushing in after him—for the wicket had given way—when a dispute outside attracted his attention.

"Nobody passes!" exclaimed one of the soldiers.

"Who says so?" asked a gruff voice whose owner appeared considerably ruffled.

"'Tis the *consigne!*" was the reply.

"Bah!" rejoined the other; "we've just done work, and want our dinner! We left it at the *cabaret*, so let us pass!"

"*Tonnerre dieu!*" shouted D'Argenson, advancing; "who disputes my commands?"

But before the words were well out of his mouth, the intruders cleared themselves a passage by main force, and suddenly stood face to face with him.

These men were Samson le Gross and Bourliquet, the latter, empty-handed, with his brawny arms bared to above the elbow, the former armed with a ponderous crow-bar, such as masons commonly use.

"By your leave, Monseigneur," said Samson, atttempting to pass D'Argenson into the *cabaret*.

"Back, varlet!" exclaimed the latter, pushing him rudely aside; "a guard here," continued he; "arrest these men!"

But Bourliquet, watching his opportunity, grasped the Lieutenant of Police round the body, and lifting him up, swung him completely round, and then dashed him to the ground, the mason precipitately retreating into the wine-shop whither he was almost instantly followed by the smith.

Foaming with rage, D'Argenson no sooner recovered his feet than he rushed, sword in hand, upon Bourliquet, at whom he made a furious lunge, but Samson beating down his weapon, kept him at bay with his iron bar, whilst Bourliquet seizing one of the huge wooden pitchers that stood upon the counter flourished it menacingly above his head, swearing to dash in the skull of the first man who advanced towards him.

"Curs!" shrieked D'Argenson, livid with anger, and addressing his subordinates; "fire upon the clowns! *Sang dieu!*"

But the men, pent up in a narrow space, had not room to handle their weapons, and were compelled to stand inactive.

This scene took place in much less time than it has required to describe it, causing a large crowd to assemble about the door and in the narrow street; it was composed chiefly of workmen and students who on learning the object of the Lieutenant of Police in coming there, began to show symptoms of espousing the vintner's quarrel

and joining issue with Bourliquet and Samson, both well and favourably known in the quarter; besides which, the ancient prejudices of the clerks of the University against the civil authorities, yet slumbered in the minds of the former, at any time ripe for any kind of mischief, but especially for a contest with the police and the *recors* of its Lieutenant; but as yet, they confined their manifestations to groans and yells.

Perceiving how matters stood, D'Argenson bade one of the officers take a party of soldiers round by the court yard, and assail Chopin in the rear, but the vintner, foreseeing this manœuvre, contrived during the recent struggle, to bar and barricade the door, so that the soldiers found themselves at fault; notwithstanding this check, however, they commenced breaking it in.

No sooner, however, did Bourliquet and Samson hear the knocking than they fell, might and main, upon the soldiers and D'Argenson, whom they forced out into the street, in spite of their struggles, for the men, embarrassed by their accoutrements and cramped for room, had not a chance of maintaining their position, and were glad to escape: once out, the door of the *cabaret* was closed against them, the victors fastening it on the inside.

This exploit was greeted by the mob with a loud shout of exultation that served to incense the Lieutenant of Police—already mortified at his defeat—to the highest pitch.

"Drive them back, the dogs!" shouted he to the soldiers, and pointing to the crowd who now pressed them closer and closer.

"Down with the *mouchards!*" shouted the mob in reply, yelling and groaning outrageously.

D'Argenson uttering a loud curse dashed into the thick of the throng, laying about him right and left with the pommel of his sword; the soldiers followed up the advantage he had gained, and soon cleared a space sufficiently wide to leave their movements free.

"Now!" cried D'Argenson, "break in the door! *Tonnerre dieu!* We will see whether our authority is to be set at defiance!"

A simultaneous yell from the crowd followed this observation, accompanied by a volley of huge stones.

D'Argenson hesitated, it was only for a second;

"Miscreants!" shouted he; "do ye want blood? Drive them back at the point of the bayonet!"

Again the soldiers rushed in amongst the mob, but opening to let them pass, it instantly closed upon them, so that they suddenly found themselves separated from their comrades, and at the mercy of those they had assailed, from whose fury they were saved only by the promptitude of the Lieutenant of Police in heading a second party to their rescue, but not before some two or three on each side had been severely wounded.

Finding matters growing more serious than he had anticipated, D'Argenson attempted to address the crowd with a view to dissuade it from opposing him in the execution of his duty, but his voice was drowned by another yell, louder and more prolonged than any that had preceded it, the people again pressing round the soldiers in one compact mass, threatening them with angry gestures.

Whilst this scene occurred outside, and the soldiers were continuing their attack upon the doors, the following colloquy took place between the vintner, Samson, and Bourliquet, the former having reapeared at his counter.

"'Tis getting warm!" observed the smith, alluding to the fray; "but never fear, friend Chopin, we will not quit thy side!"

"And we have friends outside who are not afraid of a musket;" rejoined the mason.

"I wish I had my hammer," ejaculated Bourliquet, with a sigh; "I'd show them some sport."

"I can lend thee an axe!" suggested Chopin.

"That will do," replied Bourliquet.

Whilst the vintner sought the axe, the smith stationed himself at the front door, the mason at the back, and Chopin having armed himself with a brace of petronels, took up his position midway between them so as to lend assistance to which might most need it.

The front door not being so strongly barricaded yielded first, and the soldiers were about to rush in when they saw Samson brandishing his ponderous crow-bar in the entry; they hesitated:

"*Sang dieu!*" shouted D'Argenson; "are ye afraid of one man? Follow *me*, ye *curs*!" and he bounded to the door.

But Samson, aware of his advantage, darted forwards to meet him, aiming a blow at him, which if it had struck him would at once have ended the conflict; D'Argenson stepped aside in time to avoid the stroke, which falling with terrific force upon the two soldiers in his rear, laid them prostrate.

"Fire upon the wretch!" shouted the Lieutenant of Police, pointing to Samson, whose huge person blocked up the door-way.

But e're they had time to form, a shower of brick-bats and stones assailed the men from every side, the crowd having become so dense as completely to hem in the military, several of whom were wounded by the flying missiles.

D'Argenson no longer hesitated, but making his men face about, commanded them to fire upon the people, giving an officer a few instructions in an under-tone; a few seconds after, the latter having contrived to make his way through the crowd, might have been seen directing his steps in all haste towards the *chatelet*.

The contest now commenced in earnest: the mob, staggered by the first discharge of musketry, fell back a few paces, the wounded being instantly removed from off the field, but the rush that followed this first movement of hesitation was terrific; instead of waiting quietly to be massacred (after the fashion of an English mob) the whole mass fell pell-mell upon the soldiers, hemming them in on all sides, dragging them down and trampling them under foot; D'Argenson, compelled to abandon his position before the door of the *cabaret*, rushed into the thickest of the fray, foaming like an infuriated lion, and endeavouring to rally his men, for he knew that once mixed up with the rioters, force of numbers must overpower them; in the struggle his sword snapped asunder, but nothing daunted, he fought with the pommel, dashing it into the faces of his assailants,

and by his daring, turning the tide whithersover he went: encouraged by his example the soldiers gradually recovered their coolness, and under his eye formed into a line, presenting a triple row of bayonets to the advancing crowd, effectually checking its progress for the time; by this manœuvre, Samson, who had attacked D'Argenson in the rear was forced to make a precipitate retreat into the *cabaret*, where he now stood at bay.

In the interim, the smith was engaged in an unequal contest with the party that had been sent to force the other door, which after a long resistance gave way; the entry of the soldiers was nevertheless impeded by a number of empty barrels that Chopin had purposely rolled in the door-way, ensconced behind which, Bourliquet was enabled successfully to defend his position, his formidable weapon falling with fatal effect upon the intruders, who were struck down one by one as they strove to force their way in. Finding that his men were at a great disadvantage, but resolved to fulfil his mission, the officer called them off, and bidding one of them bring a truss of straw from the shed in the court-yard, cast it down in front of the door, and fired it by discharging a musket into it; the next instant he was brought down by a shot from Chopin's petronel and fell back a corpse, into the arms of his comrades.

At this moment, D'Argenson succeeded in dislodging Samson from his position, who finding himself likely to be overpowered, quickly retreated into the little parlor now fast filling with smoke and flame; fortunately, however, for him and his two companions, the Lieutenant of Police was immediately compelled to abandon his advantage in consequence of a fresh and more furious onset by the mob.

His position soon became exceedingly critical, for many of the rioters having armed themselves with various weapons, especially short knives, now began to use them with fatal effect upon the soldiers, their strength being continually increased by the addition of new comers, who, excited by the sight of blood, rushed into the fray with the ferocity of the bull-dog, fighting hand to hand, and no sooner being driven back one way than they renewed their attack on another side. The fire-arms of the military became comparatively of little service, for the rioters hemmed the latter in too closely to afford them opportunity of using their weapons, and to increase their confusion, Chopin, Bourliquet and the mason, attacked them in the rear, the two latter felling every one before them, and exciting the mob by their shouts and gestures. In vain D'Argenson strove to stem the fury of the populace; in vain he performed feats of courage worthy of a hero; the tide of victory set against him; he found himself every moment losing ground, and the number of his men rapidly diminishing; he was growing faint too, for he had received two or three severe wounds, besides one on the head from a stone, the blood from which flowed profusely; covered with gore and panting for breath he still fought on, striving to keep his men together so as to present a bold front to his assailants; all at once he encountered Chopin, who, having been separated from his comrades was striving to make his way back into the *cabaret*; quick

as thought he grasped him by the throat, and wrenching the petronel from the vintner's grasp, struck him with it upon the head, but the next moment was himself felled by a blow from Samson, whilst Bourliquet, who was close in his rear, dragged Chopin away, into the *cabaret*, followed by the mason, who was badly wounded in the left arm by a musket shot.

Seing D'Argenson fall, the mob set up a loud shout of exultation, but its triumph was short-lived, for a strong detachment of cavalry suddenly made its appearance at the angle of the street, headed by the officer whom D'Argenson had recently despatched to the *châtelet*.

This unexpected re-enforcement speedily altered the aspect of affairs, for unable to contend against the new comers, seconded by the other soldiers, who now rallied, the mob, after attempting a short but desperate resistance dispersed in every direction, leaving the space in front of the *cabaret* in possession of the military.

"I am afraid Monseigneur is badly hurt," said the officer who assisted D'Argenson to his feet.

"Stunned, only stunned," replied the latter with a groan; "But where are the miscreants who caused this mischief?"

"They have retreated into the *cabaret*, Monseigneur!"

"Pursue them, then, *sang dieu!* growled he.

During the short struggle that followed the arrival of the cavalry, the three Lutetians held a hurried conference; they had succeeded in extinguishing the fire by staving upon it the contents of a cask of wine that stood at the top of the steps leading to the vaults, but the soldiery still held possession of the court-yard, so that flight that way was impossible, whilst D'Argenson and his party blockaded the front; thus they were completely hemmed in.

"We must take to the cellar!" observed Samson.

"The Emperor has forbidden me to risk our secret!" said Chopin; "if we retreat by the passage in the wall, D'Argenson's suspicions will amount to a certainty! we must conceal ourselves.

"We must be quick then," exclaimed Samson, "they're coming!"

Without another word being exchanged they hurried down the steps, but not before D'Argenson's party, had seen them disappear.

"*Tonnerre dieu!*" shouted he, "they will escape us! Quick; torches here!"

Meanwhile the Lutetians made good their retreat into the vaults, where, to their amazement, they found Jacques, torch in hand, waiting to receive them:

"I know all," exclaimed he, silencing them by a gesture; "you have done your duty, but more remains to be done!"

"Are we to let ourselves be shot?" asked Samson; "I'm ready if 'tis necessary."

"You must allow yourselves to be captured," replied Jacques; "D'Argenson suspects the existence of a secret passage in these vaults!" Finding you here he will believe himself mistaken! Leave the rest to me! You shall be watched, and saved if danger menace you!"

"*Vive* Lutetia!" cried Chopin.

"And the Emperor!" chimed in Samson.

"For ever!" added Bourliquet.

Jacques shook hands with them and disappeared in the secret passage; scarcely was he gone before D'Argenson and his party entered the vaults.

"This way! this way!" exclaimed he; "I saw them!"

At this moment the three Lutetians purposely crossed his path, at the distance of some ten paces: their appearance was hailed with a shout of exultation from the soldiers.

"Pursue them," cried D'Argenson; "but take them alive!"

The men set off in chase of the fugitives, who allowed themselves to be quietly captured, threading every winding in the vaults.

"Caught at last!" exclaimed the Lieutenant of Police with a savage chuckle; "we will see what hanging can do for you! Let them be conducted under a strong escort to the Bastile," continued he, speaking to an officer; "and tell St. Marc to look that they escape not! *Tonnerre dieu!* An army of rebels and traitors might lodge here!"

Whilst the prisoners were being conducted away, D'Argenson scrupulously examined every nook of Chopin's extensive cellars, every moment expecting to discover the passage of which he suspected the existence, though he knew not whither it could lead, but doomed always to be disappointed: at length he gave up the search in despair, muttering to himself as he retraced his steps to the street:

"Curses upon this unfortunate affair! My suspicions were ill-founded! had there been a means of escape they would have taken advantage of it! 'Tis plain I was mistaken!"

Leaving a strong guard in possession of the *Cep-de-Vigne*, the Lieutenant of Police returned to his quarters, overwhelmed with disappointment.

CHAPTER LXI.

A SURPRISE.

Rather more than a week after the riot, D'Argenson, having recovered from the wounds and contusions he had received, repaired to the *château* of Versailles; he was in excellent spirits, for his presentiments of evil had not been fulfilled, and he therefore deemed himself perfectly secure, not doubting but that the bold and politic step he was about to take would not only re-establish him in the king's favour

more firmly than ever, but prove the means of averting from his head the calamity he dreaded, in the event of Jacques's fatal disclosures reaching the royal ear at any subsequent period, relying upon his own address to turn the scale in his own favour, should the monarch then appear disposed to treat him with severity.

He had written to the king soliciting an interview, and had received a gracious message in reply, appointing him to come, "*as soon as he should be convalescent; and on any evening after seven o'clock.*"

Louis was in Madame de Maintenon's chamber, alone with her, when the Lieutenant of Police was announced; he held a book in his hand, being seated in an arm-chair before the fire, with his feet resting upon a stool, and his left elbow on the table, at which, occupying the left hand side of the chimney-corner, sat his consort, intent upon a piece of embroidery. There was likewise on the table a box of sweetmeats to which the king frequently helped himself.

"So, Monseigneur," exclaimed Louis as D'Argenson entered, "you are once more re-established!"

"Your Majesty is too condescending!" replied he, kneeling to kiss the King's hand; "I *am*, quite re-established!"

"Which *our Majesty*," continued the king, jocosely, "is enchanted to hear! Rise, Monseigneur, rise!" and he pointed to a chair.

The Lieutenant of Police took a seat at the King's right hand, opposite to Madame de Maintenon—who had not as yet raised her eyes from her work—he felt much embarrassed how to bring about the colloquy he desired, for he had not anticipated the presence of a third personage, least of all of her whom, for particular reasons, he did not wish to be privy to the interview.

Whilst D'Argenson was *settling himself*, Louis exchanged a glance with his consort, unperceived by the former, and which though slight, was replete with meaning; he then addressed him:

"Well, Monseigneur," exclaimed he; "you wished to see us! Here we are *en famille!*"

The Lieutenant of Police, delighted to find his royal master so affably inclined, determined to strike the grand blow at once, but wanted first, to get rid of Madame de Maintenon, whom he feared on account of her great penetration.

"What I have to communicate to your Majesty," said he, hesitatingly, "relates to the State!"

"Oh!" remarked the King, glancing from him to de Maintenon; "I understand! But go on, Monseigneur, we are all ears; Madame is all eyes!"

Obliged to comply in spite of his reluctance, D'Argenson inclined his body, and after a prefatory hem or two said:

"I have agreeable intelligence for your Majesty, and only regret I could not sooner communicate it, for I wished to enjoy the happiness of imparting it myself!"

The King bowed, smiled, and ate a *bonbon*; Madame de Maintenon coughed.

"Your Majesty," resumed D'Argenson, "some short time since

applied to me for a large sum of money, for which your Majesty had an extraordinary necessity!"

"Alas, yes!" ejaculated Louis, sighing, and speaking in a half-serious, half-comic tone; "our necessities are always extraordinary!"

"Your Majesty required two hundred and fifty thousand crowns," continued the wily minister; "that sum is at your Majesty's service, with another two hundred and fifty thousand added!"

The King was astounded, but replied not; de Maintenon made two wrong stitches: and immediately discovering her error began picking them out: D'Argenson triumphed.

"This *is* news, Monseigneur," exclaimed Louis at last; "you are indeed a valuable Minister! The money will be most acceptable, and we do command you to pay it into our treasury to morrow! I am so pleased, Monseigneur, that I cannot even thank you!"

"Oh, your Majesty," replied the other, with a lowly bend; "no thanks are necessary! I am sufficiently repaid by the pleasure I experience in doing my duty!"

"We know, Monseigneur, that to do your duty is your greatest pleasure! But have you no favour to ask us in return?"

De Maintenon bit her lip.

"None, many thanks to your Majesty," answered D'Argenson.

"I am sorry!" retorted the monarch, cracking another sweetmeat.

"I trust your Majesty is perfectly satisfied with my humble services, resumed the Lieutenant of Police insinuatingly.

The King hesitated a moment, then retorted, rather hastily:

"Oh, yes; perfectly Monseigneur; perfectly."

"I am saved!" thought D'Argenson. "I hope," continued he; "that if any thing in my department does not meet with your Majesty's approval, your Majesty will deign to inform me of it, in order that the evil may be immediately remedied!"

The King looked steadfastly at his Minister, for a short space, and smiled; the smile was scarcely marked, but possessed such peculiar significancy, that D'Argenson felt uncomfortable, and to show some cause for his embarrassment, uttered a faint cry of pain.

"Monseigneur suffers?" ejaculated the King, inquiringly.

"Only a slight twinge, your Majesty," replied the Lieutenant.

Madame de Maintenon looked up, and under pretence of threading her needle, contrived to catch Louis' eye, and at the same time steal a glance at D'Argenson's countenance; it was flushed and uneasy.

"I hope," resumed Louis with great show of commiseration, "that the journey hither has not fatigued you!"

The Lieutenant of Police felt re-assured.

"But slightly, thanks to your Majesty," answered he; "it will be nothing."

The King once more attacked his *bonbonnière*, exchanging sly glances with his consort who still continued her occupation assiduously.

Having satisfied himself upon the one point that had caused him so much uneasiness, D'Argenson began to consider what was the best

pretext he could assume for retiring, when Louis leaned across the table, and whispered to Madame de Maintenon, who arose, and crossed to the opposite side of the apartment; opening a bureau that stood there, she took therefrom a bulky packet of papers neatly folded up in white paper, which she brought and laid upon the table by the King's side, and without saying a word, resumed her embroidering, in which she immediately became apparently totally absorbed.

The Lieutenant of Police awaited the result with impatience.

"I am glad," said the King, talking whilst he opened the packet, selecting therefrom several papers and laying them down by his side, "that the charges lately alleged against the Baron de St. Auney were unfounded!"

This was said with great indifference, just as if the King, inclined for a chat, had broached the subject that came uppermost, but the allusion made D'Argenson tremble; whilst his countenance, upon which de Maintenon fixed her gaze, unnoticed, turned livid as death.

"I—I crave Your Majesty's indulgence," observed he in reply, faltering as he spoke, and as if he had not heard.

"I say," resumed Louis, affably, "that from your having signed a writ of release in favour of the Baron de St. Auney, we infer that the charges you recently alleged against him, were unfounded!"

"They could not be proved, your Majesty," rejoined D'Argenson, readily, "wherefore he was set at liberty!"

"Hum!" exclaimed the King; "and his daughter also—of course."

"Ye—s; your Majesty," stammered the Lieutenant, now quite confused, fearing to tell the truth, and hazarding a lie upon his presumption of the King's ignorance of her fate, for he himself firmly believed her to be dead.

The King paused awhile, turning over the documents before him, occasionally looking aside at his consort, whose face slightly flushed; when their eyes met, they smiled significantly.

"The Baron de St. Auney's forefather," continued Louis, chattily, "rendered our great ancestor some important services during the civil wars; we feel much interested in him! And strange to say, his only sister, Constance, espoused an ancient aide-de-camp of our own, the Sieur Count de St. Angin, whose son, we hear, after one and twenty years' absence from his only surviving relatives—who believed him lost—has lately been discovered serving in our Corps of Musketeers, under the assumed name of St. Marcel le Trouvé! We shall be glad to see the young man, at the expiration of his furlough! If he resembles his father, he lacks not for courage or for loyalty!"

D'Argenson sat on thorns, the perspiration streaming down his face in large drops: but neither the King nor Madame de Maintenon appeared to remark his agitation.

"Do you know the young man, Monseigneur?" inquired Louis.

"I have seen him," answered the Lieutenant, endeavouring to compose himself; "I know, by sight, all the officers of the corps!"

"Hum! But you were acquainted with his father, Monseigneur? He lived in the province of which you were Bailiff for us!"

"Yes, your Majesty!" stammered D'Argenson, suffering the most horrible mental torture; "my duties frequently brought me into connexion with him! He died of the epidemic fever in Paris!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Louis, still intent upon the documents before him; "I was not aware of *that!*"

D'Argenson hazarded the foregoing assertion, with a view to bring matters to a crisis, for notwithstanding that the King had made no remark to lead him (D'Argenson) to infer that he was acquainted with his fearful secret, his heart misgave him, and he resolved to learn the worst at once: Louis' reply completely reassured him, for he argued that if the King knew the truth, the opportunity he thus purposely created would not be allowed to pass without the terrible accusation following it; still he could not, in spite of the relief he experienced, all at once overcome his agitation, for the reaction of joy affected him almost as powerfully as the alarm that preceded it; all at once, turning suddenly round, the King exclaimed:

"But, you surely are unwell, Monseigneur!"

"I was rudely treated by the mob at the riot, please your Majesty," answered the Minister, attempting to smile resignedly.

"It was a melancholy affair, Monseigneur," said Louis, slightly frowning; "we are not pleased with your conduct on that occasion!"

"I understood Your Majesty just now to say that—"

"Yes, Monseigneur; but our satisfaction is only partial!"

"I much regret the circumstance, please your Majesty; but I acted for the interest and welfare of the state, and for the assurance of public tranquillity! Your Majesty has doubtless read my report!"

"Yes, Monseigneur! But we have reason to know that you overstepped the limits of your authority!"

"Your Majesty will pardon an excess of zeal in his service!"

"Yes, Monseigneur, on account of the value we attach to you as our Minister, and of the very important services you have rendered us! But this must not occur again! We will have the rights of our good citizens respected! We require their assistance when the safety of our empire is menaced by the enemy, and they have a claim upon us to protect them from oppression! You acted without your usual judgment, Monseigneur, and were not justified in arresting an unoffending *bourgeois* without first exhibiting your warranty!"

D'Argenson was overwhelmed with confusion.

"In extenuation, may it please your Majesty," said he, with great humility, "I can only plead my zeal in your service! Besides, I had strong suspicions of the place being a resort for evil-characters, even traitors—" here he looked at Madame de Maintenon, who returned his gaze unflinchingly—"though my suspicions proved unfounded, the contrary might have been the case; I should not then have been exposed to rebuke from your Majesty!"

"We will not have cause given to our citizens to become disaffected, Monseigneur," replied the King, dictatorially, "with every chance of war shortly being declared against us, we have imperative reasons for exciting their loyalty! for mercenaries are not to be depended on

as those men are who fight to protect their family hearth! Besides, Monseigneur, you are not candid with us! You acknowledge that your suspicions were unfounded, and consequently, that your attack upon the citizens was unjustifiable—though we are willing to believe it proceeded from an over-zeal in our service—and yet you still retain three men prisoners in the Bastile, whom, if I have heard the truth, you purpose soon to hang!"

The Lieutenant of Police, paralyzed with astonishment, made a few abortive attempts to speak, but found himself unable to utter a word! What did all this mean? and to what would it lead? He knew not, nor durst conjecture.

"Those men, Monseigneur," resumed Louis, severely, "must be set at liberty to-morrow!"

"Your Majesty's commands shall be obeyed," ejaculated D'Argenson, finding himself obliged to draw in his horns.

"Good, Monseigneur! and with them two others who have been confined now upwards of two months; and this by another stretch of your authority!"

"Who are they, please your Majesty?" enquired the Lieuetnant of Police, breathless with astonishment.

"Two couriers, Monseigneur," answered Louis, with increased severity, and a darker frown on his brow; "do you know them?"

"I—I do, your Majesty!" was the almost inarticulate rejoinder.

"Then we understand each other so far, Monseigneur?"

"I hope so, your Majesty," replied the minister.

There ensued another brief pause, during which the King glanced his eye over the contents of a paper which he had selected from the packet; making a significant sign to his consort, who, up to this moment, had appeared wholly taken up with her work, he placed the same in D'Argenson's hands and bade him read it.

The latter took the paper, but had scarcely looked at it than it fell from his hand, and he became aware that both the King and de Maintenon were gazing intently at him.

Louis had given him the confession of Etienne Quinault.

Pale as a corpse, the perspiration oozing from every pore of his quivering frame, with lips white and dry as though they had been recently seared, D'Argenson sat motionless as a statue, returning the look of his royal master with a fixed, glazed and vacant stare: at last the king broke silence, picking up the paper:

"Well, Monseigneur," exclaimed he; "Is this true?"

The culprit's jaw moved, but articulation had fled; after several attempts to reply, he stammered out, dropping upon his knee.

"Pardon, your Majesty! Be merciful!"

"We *do* pardon, you, Monseigneur," was the rejoinder; "but it costs us much! Rise, Monseigneur!"

D'Argenson rose, or rather staggered to his feet, annihilated with shame and confusion, for not having anticipated this blow, he was totally unprepared to meet it; for a few seconds he stood irresolute, then, in a husky, choked voice, ventured to address the king:

"Your Majesty," said he, "has reason to withdraw his confidence from me! I cannot, under circumstances, longer hold my present office! I request permission to lay my resignation at the feet of your Majesty?"

The King paused awhile, then replied with great dignity.

"Monseigneur," observed he, "we attach too much value to you in your public capacity, to do ourselves and you so great an injustice as to accept your resignation! It is our will and pleasure that you retain your office!"

D'Argenson was thunderstruck, but more mortified.

"It grieves me," resumed he, after a brief interval, "to disobey your Majesty's commands, but I feel that I must decline your Majesty's magnanimous offer!"

"Then, Monseigneur," rejoined Louis, his face flushed, and his eyes glowing with anger, "we have but to give you a choice! We are willing, in consideration of your capacity as a servant of the State, to overlook a circumstance the knowledge of which is as yet limited to ourselves, but if our lenity is scorned we must retract our pardon! For the same reason, and also because we hope you will, when the opportunity offers itself, continue to exert your talents with as much zeal as heretofore, we are willing that you shall continue in your present office, but if you refuse to serve us, instead of our generosity, our justice must speak! Choose then, Monseigneur; will you continue our servant, or must we consign you to the Bastile, and confiscate your property, allowing the brand of a felon to rest upon your name? Your answer, for we are peremptory!"

D'Argenson's hesitation—for he did hesitate—was of short duration; he could have faced death, but disgrace? no! Falling on his knee before his royal master, he said:

"I have no alternative but to remain your Majesty's devoted servant! If I hesitated to accept your Majesty's most gracious offer, it was because I felt myself unworthy of his confidence!"

"Monseigneur D'Argenson," retorted Louis, making him a sign to rise, "the past shall be buried in oblivion, nor ever resuscitated unless we have cause. But look to it, Monseigneur, how you act in future towards those in whose welfare we take an interest! I will not mention names, but you doubtless comprehend me!"

Completely crest-fallen, the Lieutenant of Police muttered:

"I do, your Majesty!"

At this moment Madame de Maintenon said something to Louis in an under-tone, who in reply smiled and looked aside at D'Argenson; she smiled too, there appearing to be between them some secret intelligence relating to the latter personage, who trembled again, dreading some new catastrophe:

"His Majesty has granted me permission, Monseigneur," said de Maintenon, summoning the page in waiting, "to introduce a young protégée of mine whom I have only very lately been able to have under my own eye!"

Here the page entered, and after receiving his mistress's instruc-

tions, delivered in a low tone, bowed and withdrew; de Maintenon continued:

"She has received some hard usage at the hands of a party well known to you, and I would crave your protection for her, Monseigneur, in case of need!"

"It is sufficient, Madame," returned the Lieutenant of Police, "that you take an interest in the young lady, for me to do your wishes concerning her, as far as lays in my power! I hope there will be no necessity for any interference on my part!"

"I hope not," thought Madame de Maintenon.

There ensued a pause, during which the latter personage and her royal lord exchanged significant smiles and signs, looking towards the door with impatience; D'Argenson awaited the issue of this strange scene with great anxiety: at length the page returned, ushering in the expected visiter, who entered the apartment timidly, her eyes bent towards the ground: what was D'Argenson's astonishment and consternation when he beheld Julie de St. Auney.

In spite of the presence of the King, on perceiving her hateful persecutor, the maiden uttered a loud exclamation of terror, and sank into a chair; de Maintenon instantly got up, and taking her by the hand, encouraged her to rise:

"*Allons, allons!*" said the King, good-humouredly, for readily entering into the scheme that had suddenly suggested itself to Madame de Maintenon to punish D'Argenson's duplicity, he enjoyed this individual's embarrassment amazingly, even seeking to augment it.

"Come, my child," added de Maintenon; "Monseigneur has made the *amende honourable*, and desires to hear thee pronounce his pardon! Thy troubles are at an end!"

"Oh, Madame! oh, your Majesty! pardon me—" exclaimed Julie, and falling on her knees she took the proffered hand of the King and raised it to her lips.

The first shock passed, D'Argenson comprehended the whole truth, but was unable to utter a word either to ask forgiveness of the maiden he had so much injured, or in extenuation of his conduct; the King saw his perplexity, and said, smilingly:

"Never mind explanations, Monseigneur! This is a *coup à-la-Maintenon!* But you appear fatigued, and you have to return to Paris to-night!"

Glad of any opportunity to escape, the Lieutenant of Police taking the hint, staggered past the King, and with a profound bow, hurriedly quitted the apartment, not daring to direct his gaze upon either de Maintenon or Julie.

"Come, child," said de Maintenon, as soon as he was gone; "look up! I sent for thee to tell thee that his Majesty has condescended to honour thy marriage with his presence!"

"Yes," chimed in the King, "and we will take care of thy dowry, and add our trifle to the *corbeil de noces!*"

"I am overwhelmed by so much condescension," stammered

Julie; "I can never pray sufficiently for your Majesty, nor for you, Madame!"

* * * * * * *

On the fourth morning after the events above recorded, the marriage of Julie de St. Auney to the Count de St. Leu was solemnized in the small chapel of the *château* of Versailles, and was graced by the presence of the monarch and his consort, and by a few privileged members of the nobility; the nuptial benediction being given by the reverend Father de la Chaise; the Baron, though not yet recovered from the effects of his long confinement and the cruel treatment he had experienced, looked happy once more, and gave away his daughter, Jeanne acting as bridesmaid to her sister; but in spite of the happiness she felt, she was observed to look wistfully round, and wipe away a tear; the worthy and bluff Commandant, be it said served the bridegroom in the capacity of *garçon-d'honneur*, making but two mistakes in the course of the ceremony, which caused some slight confusion at the time, and formed a standing joke against him until he died some ten years after, having taken Dame Dorothé to wife as soon as his gout became too troublesome for him to manage longer alone.

After the ceremony was concluded and the happy pair had taken their departure, the following colloquy was carried on in an undertone between two of the assistants, who had unexpectedly met there:

"Well, Chevalier, when are *you* going to take the fatal step? I am dying of impatience to see your bride!"

"The marriage-contract, Madame la Marquise, was drawn up three weeks ago, and requires only the signature of the lady to make it complete! If you are agreeable it shall be signed to-morrow?"

"Chevalier!" exclaimed the lady, astounded.

"Elise!" rejoined he; "do we unnderstand each other? I have had *my* revenge; be mine and have *your's*!"

There was no verbal reply made, but two hands met, pressed each other, and all was said; and so on that day weekElise Marquise de Beauvais plighted her troth to the Chevalier de Mont-Fleuri!

CHAPTER LXII.

A DENOUEMENT.

On the fourteenth day of November, about seven months after the marriage of Julie de St. Auney, a grand and imposing ceremony took place at the *château* of Versailles, to prepare the reader for which he must go back with us to the period of the interview of D'Argenson with Chamillart and Madame de Maintenon.

Satisfied of the duplicity of the Lieutenant of Police, and divining the true motive that had brought him to Versailles, de Maintenon immediately placed herself in communication with Jacques, in order that he might be upon his guard and take proper measures to cheat the vigilance of their common opponent; the result of their arrangement was a *ruse* calculated to keep D'Argenson constantly on the watch, and yet lull his suspicions, and by allowing certain despatches to fall into his hands, the said despatches being so concocted as to bear a mysterious import, entirely to deceive him; by this artifice they soon acquired the certainty of his intentions to play a double game, for the bearers of the fictitious despatches were regularly stopped by him, and only allowed to proceed to their destination after the contents of the same had been scrupulously examined; though not one word ever reached the knowledge of de Maintenon; need it be added that the parties to whom these documents were addressed belonged to the secret community of Lutetians?

Meanwhile the real couriers were waylaid in the vicinity of the *auberge* already known, by some of the spy's trusty friends, and their despatches taken from them, and conveyed to Father Simon, or to Chamillart, or to whomsoever else they were directed; thus de Maintenon acquired accurate and speedy knowledge of every movement of her political opponents and was enabled to take the necessary measures for disconcerting their projects.

D'Argenson suspecting nothing, continued his treachery, every day expecting to arrive at the grand secret; but doomed to be disappointed ever; at length he began to despair, and had determined upon telling the king what he had discovered, when the death of Quinault and the subsequent event to which it led, effectually frustrated his intentions, the release of the two couriers, by the King's command leaving him to infer that Madame de Maintenon had forestalled him, though this was an erroneous impression, for knowing too well that to place the King in possession of the facts would probably ruin what had been so well begun and promised so well to end,

she had contrived adroitly to interest Louis in their favour, expressly with a view to induce this false supposition in the mind of D'Argenson, and she perfectly succeeded; thus the field was again her own.

Through Chamillart's advice, this minister, having first received his cue from her, Louis recalled the Marquis D'Harcourt from Madrid to command the army that he now assembled on the Spanish frontiers in order to intimidate the dying monarch, Charles, who had written to the Emperor of Germany assuring him that the Arch-duke should inherit his kingdom and his crown; thus there was no French ambassador at the court of Madrid, nor indeed any one to watch over the interests of Louis Quatorze until de Maintenon despatched thither her confidential emissary: that emissary was St. Marcel.

From the day on which the young man began to act, the intrigue assumed a favourable aspect for France; provided with proper credentials to the principal members of the Gallic confederacy, he was received by them with open arms, the real object of his visit being kept a profound secret; acting up to the letter of his instructions, and backed by the recommendatory epistles of his Eminence, the Cardinal Portocarrero, Archbishop of Toledo — in plain terms, of Father Pierre Simon—he soon grew into favour with the church party, and by a series of adroit manœuvres induced it to make common cause with the Gallic confederacy; in short, Charles, governed by his wife, and in her absence by his confessor, was at length induced by the pious exhortations of the latter, to draw up a will in favour of the young Duke of Anjou, the grand-son of Louis Quatorze, but the King hesitated to sign it until he should receive an answer to the letter he had written to his Holiness the Pope, requesting him to "*advise his son for the best, whether he should dismember his monarchy, or make a will in favour of the young Arch-duke, or whether he should bequeath his crown to a descendant of the King of France.*"

Pope Innocent the Twelfth received with the King's letter, another from the Count D'Harcourt beseeching him to temporize with Charles, until he should hear from Versailles, a request which his Holiness complied with, for besides being personally inclined to favour the French party, he felt jealous of the power of Austria, his neighbour, and hoping to affranchize Italy by weakening the former empire wherever she was vulnerable, kept the Spanish Monarch in suspense for the space of four months, when he wrote to him saying, "*that the laws of Spain and the welfare of Christendom, rendered it imperative upon him to accord the preference to the house of Bourbon.*"

Cardinal Portocarrero was immediately informed of this fact by Cardinal de Janson, in a letter bearing date the 18th of July, de Maintenon being in due course informed of it likewise by the former personage with whom she forthwith held a long consultation to which Chamillart was admitted; it was resolved that the minister should inform Louis of this piece of good news, keeping from him every other circumstance connected with the intrigue; this was a bold and

politic stroke, because by it, Louis's mind was set at ease, and it gave him courage to await the demise of Charles patiently.

But Louis wanted money to pay his troops on the Spanish frontier, who had become mutinous, hence the importance of the service D'Argenson rendered the King by the advance of the 1,500,000 livres which he had extorted from St. Marc, and hence too the secret of the King's leniency towards him. It need not be said that de Maintenon, always through the medium of Chamillart, profited by this timely supply and by an opportune remittance to D'Harcourt, effectually quieted the men upon whom so much depended, for as soon as Charles died, it was purposed to march the army direct upon Madrid and take possession of the country in the name of Philip the Fifth, in order to prevent Austria from forestalling them.

As the event fell out, however, this decisive step was rendered unnecessary.

But notwithstanding the Pope's letter to Charles, and his own inclination to comply with his Holines's wish, the weak-minded monarch found it impossible to sign his will, for the Queen his consort, strongly attached to the interests of the House of Austria, now never quitted his bed side for a moment, or if she did, her place was during her absence occupied by one of her creatures; as yet she did not know that he had made a will at all, and determined that when he did, it should be in favour of the Arch-duke, she shut out every body from her dying husband's chamber, in order that her authority over him might be the more absolute.

Matters remained in this state for three months, when it became apparent that the king could not survive many days longer; still the will remained unsigned, and the Queen more vigilant than ever.

Resolved not to lose the advantage he had gained, St. Marcel counselled his party to take a bold step, and by some dexterous manœuvre contrive to cause the Queen to leave the King's chamber, the expedient was judged politic and practicable, and was forthwith executed. An alarm of fire was raised in the rooms beneath the Kings sleeping apartment; the Queen hearing the noise and suspecting no trick, ran out in the greatest consternation as did her attendants: during her temporary absence, every thing being ready, the conspirators rushed in, and the King joyfully signed and dated the document, bequeathing his crown and all his states to the Duke of Anjou: when the Queen returned, Charles was alone.

Having accomplished his mission, St. Marcel returned in all haste to Paris, whilst his Eminence Cardinal Portocarrero, Archbishop of Toledo, otherwise Father Pierre Simon, having now nothing to detain him, quitted the city as secretly as he had entered it, and on his arrival at Madrid was *complimented upon the improvement that his sojourn at his château in Catalonia had effected in his personal appearance.*

On the morning of the fourteenth of November, then, the King, who had been lately staying at Fontainebleau, arrived at Versailles from the former place at about four o'clock.

Immediately after the levee he caused the Marquis de Castel dos Rios, the accredited ambassador from the Court of Spain, to be summoned to attend him in his cabinet, where he found him, with the Duke of Anjou by his side.

"Monseigneur," said Louis, pointing to his grand-son, "behold your King! As such your excellency may salute him!"

Upon this the Marquis knelt down before the King elect, and taking the hand that was graciously extended towards him, respectfully raised it to his lips, after which, according to the custom of his country he made a long harangue; this ended, Louis advanced, still holding his grand-son by the hand, and throwing open the large folding doors, presented himself to his assembled court, comprising the members of his family, his ministers and all the public functionaries, the Archbishop of Paris, and the venerable Père de la Chaise, the ambassadors from the various Courts and many other dignitaries together with the flower of the nobility.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed he, placing the Duke somewhat in advance of him, "behold the King of Spain! His birth called him to this crown, which was bequeathed to him by the late King! The various nations wished it to be so, and solicited me to allow it; it was the will of Heaven, and I submit with pleasure!" He then addressed his grand-son; "My son," added he, "be a good Spaniard; it is now your duty! But remember ever that you were born a Frenchman, and thus maintain union between the two kingdoms; it is the way to render them both happy, and to preserve the peace of Europe! Go, my son; the Pyrenees no longer exist!"

The King had scarcely ended than one loud, and enthusiastic shout rent the saloon.

"Louis Quatorze for ever! the King for ever! *Vive* le Grand Monarch! The King of Spain for ever!" resounded through the vast apartments, and was echoed and re-echoed again and again; the principal personages then kissed hands with the young King, and when all was over, Louis retired with him into his cabinet.

Thus was the triumph of Madame de Maintenon complete!

St. Marcel, now Count de St. Angin, having been introduced to his Majesty, and Madame de Maintenon having commended his conduct and extolled the services he had rendered to the State during the late political contest, received the Order of the Holy Ghost from the King's own hands, and was, moreover, created a Marquis, but the pride he felt on this occasion was comparatively trifling to that which he experienced within a fortnight after, when he led the lovely Jeanne de St. Auney to the altar. The only drawback to the happiness that he experienced was not to see amongst his friends, the best and most tried of them, Jacques, who for reasons of his own declined being present at the ceremony.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

"Well! it is a most *re*-markable circumstance, to be sure," ex-

claimed old Prevôt speaking to Jeanne one morning, somewhere about a twelvemonth after her marriage.

"What is; nurse?" asked she.

"Why that thou *wilt* have that boy of thine christened Jacques! There was the Countess thy sister too, I can't think what could have possessed her either to have her girl called Beatrice! Why there's not a Beatrice nor a Jacques in the family! And the Baron to allow it too! A most *re*-markable circumstance, certainly!"

We are reluctantly compelled abruptly to finish the colloquy at the most interesting part of it, for we find we have come to the end of our book.

THE IRON MASK:

AN EPISODE.

1697—1703.

"*L'homme au masque de fer est une enigme dont chacun veut connaître l e mot.*' —VOLTAIRE.

"The Man with the Iron Mask is an enigma, to which every body seeks the key."

FIRST PERIOD.

1697.

PREFATORY.

Who has not heard of the Man with the Iron Mask? An individual concerning whose fate so much has been said and written, and so much more conjectured. A man who lived and died a mystery, which to this day has never been unveiled, in spite of all the efforts made to unravel it during nearly a century and a half, and to whose memory even the grave denies a name.

But neither with his birth nor parentage have we to do here; in another place, and at another time, we shall bring our narrative concerning this mysterious personage up to the period of the commencement of this episode; for the present, the Reader must go back with us to the year **1697**.

CHAPTER I.

THE VILLAGE GOSSIPS.

Towards the evening of a bright day in the middle of Autumn, 1697, a crowd of individuals appertaining to each sex might have been seen congregated on the beach of the small hamlet of Le Gros, taking its name from the Cape on which it is situated on the extreme western coast of Provençe; some were clustered together on the low rocks and cliffs that line the sea-shore, whilst a few of the most venturesome had advanced to the very edge of the water, evidently with a view to forestall their neighbours in the object that had brought them all thither from their homes. At one particular spot the throng was greater than anywhere else, so great indeed as entirely to obstruct the way from the only commodious landing-place, a large square rock, perfectly flat, jutting suddenly up about two feet out of very deep water, and abutting upon the beach, where it formed the commencement of a path that led into the village. It was easy to perceive by the curiosity depicted upon every countenance, and to gather from the mysterious whisperings rife amongst the divers groups, that something extraordinary was about to take place, and that everybody there felt much interested in the event; every eye was turned in the same direction, and appeared fixed upon one spot, namely, the small island of St. Margaret, on which was built the castle of Montéry.

The cause of this concourse of people at this spot was as follows:

Early that morning a stranger had arrived on horse-back, and unattended, though apparently from a long journey, and having put up at the only inn, or *auberge*, that it boasted, and partaken of such refreshment as was most readily to be procured, immediately sought the residence of the civil authorities, the result of his visit to whom was the engagement, for a stipulated sum, of the services of one Pierre Durand, the proprietor of the largest fishing boat in the hamlet, for which sum he was to place himself and his boat at the disposal of the stranger, for the period of twenty-four hours; this done, the unknown returned to the inn, having appointed to meet the fisherman on the beach, within an hour from that time.

Now the arrival of a stranger under such peculiar circumstances was an occurrence of itself sufficient to engender all kinds of surmises, nor were mine host or his wife behind-hand in aiding the gossips, male and female who "*used*" their house, to a few conjectures, more or less happy, as to his identity and to the business which brought him to their locality; but when it became buzzed abroad that Pierre Durand had been engaged to do he himself knew not what, and that the stranger was to meet him on the beach, rumour's thousand busy tongues began going all at once to penetrate the secret further. As Pierre himself, however, knew nothing, he could only add *his* surmises to those of his neighbours, and count, before-hand, the forty gold pieces he was to receive for his services; this made matters worse, and as the hour drew nigh, a large crowd collected at the landing place, in the deep water outside of which Pierre Durand had moored his vessel, the object of their curiosity being to see in what direction the stranger would depart.

Punctual to a minute, the latter was seen approaching the place as the village clock struck the hour of ten; he looked neither to the right nor to the left, nor seemed surprised at the idle curiosity of the gazers to obtain a glimpse of his face, which he took no pains to conceal; without condescending even to bestow a single glance upon any of them, he made direct for the rock—the crowd dispersing somewhat to leave his passage free—and leaping into the boat with an agile step, took his seat in the stern, giving, in an under tone of voice, his commands to Pierre Durand; the boat immediately put off, followed by a hundred eyes, which watched its course out to sea, until the fact was satisfactorily ascertained that its destination was the isle of St. Margaret.

"Who could the stranger be, and what his business?" were questions in every mouth; but echo answered only, "who and what?"

The gossips having adjourned to the *Auberge*, called the "Abeille d'or," *Anglicé* "The Golden Bee," the conversation soon became general, the stranger forming the subject of it.

"What a hideous face!" cried one.

"And what eyes!" observed a second.

"He has the scowl of an evil spirit!" exclaimed a third, to which many other remarks of the same nature were added.

The gossips were not ill-natured either, for the stranger was indeed ill-favoured; he was short of stature, and ungainly in person; but his countenance! it was one so unmistakably villainous, that it needed no knowledge of the science, since propounded by Lavater, to read rascal stampt upon its every line.

Numerous and deep were the potations indulged in that morning at "The Golden Bee," over the all-absorbing topic; fresh comers continually flocking in to hear the news, and to add their conjectures to the others; notwithstanding, however, the sundry special bits of information that were thus thrown into the common stock, and the new zest they gave for a time to the various discussions afloat; as noontide approached, the conversation began to flag for want of aliment,

when it received a fresh impetus from the arrival of one Ignace Cornu, clerk to the presiding local authorities.

It was easy to infer from the self-sufficient and mysterious air of this semi-official, that he was the bearer of important intelligence; several rose to offer him their seat, others simultaneously tendering him their glass; "*they were so glad to see him, nothing could be like it;*" but Ignace was not to be tempted; he had to discharge himself of a state-message to mine host of "THE GOLDEN BEE," and straightway sought him for the purpose of delivering it, which he did within sight of the many customers outside, taking care, however, they should see him slip a piece of paper into that worthy's hand, and hear him recommend him to the strictest silence; this done he departed, after accepting, at mine host's earnest request, of a glass of "*parfait amour*," lowering his brows as he made his way out, with a view to impress the multitude that from his head—*his*, Ignace Cornu's —emanated the concentrated wisdom of the presiding local authorities.

But scarcely was Ignace Cornu fairly out of sight, than the plethoric landlord of the *auberge* ran the greatest risk of suffocation, so closely was he surrounded by his guests, in their eagerness to learn the news.

"I haven't time," said he, "fighting lustily to escape from them, "to tell you now! Besides, 'tis State Business! I must be secret!"

"Come, come, papa Tirelire—" (this was mine host's patronymic—) exclaimed some half dozen of the group, "*do* tell us what 'tis all about."

"We are sure to know before long," said another, "so what *does* it signify?"

"Come, papa Tirelire; do!" ejaculated the others again.

Whether Tirelire's heart was moved by being addressed as the *papa* of so numerous a family, or his cupidity by the multiplicity of orders that followed the tender appeal, we leave those to determine who are better versed than ourselves in the ways of human nature, certain it is, though, that his "*children*" as he affectionately called them, were not sooner served than he expressed his willingness to satisfy their curiosity, on one condition, namely; "*that they wouldn't blow a word.*"

Being historical, we are reluctantly compelled to give the exact terms of his charge, notwithstanding their inelegance.

"In the first place," continued he, after receiving the assurance he required from as many mouths as he considered essential to constitute a majority, "he's come from Antibes!"

"From Antibes!" echoed they; "oh!"

"And he's going back to night! There's a carriage coming from Antibes to fetch them!"

"*Them!*" exclaimed the listeners in astonishment.

"*Them!*" resumed papa Tirelire; exulting in the exclusiveness of his information; "but who do you think the stranger is? eh?"

Several guesses were hazarded, less with any hope of guessing the

truth than with a view to arrive at it by exciting Tirelire to continue his communications; as nobody, however, came within a hundred miles of the mark, the landlord put on one of his most important looks, and raising his hand to the corner of his mouth whispered to the nearest by-stander.

"Who? who?" asked half a dozen of the group, thrusting their heads forwards.

"The new Lieutenant of Police," answered the individual whose ear had been favoured first; "Monseigneur D'Argenson!"

A movement of surprise followed this announcement which was immediately succeeded by a strong re-action of curiosity.

"Dost thou know what he is gone to the castle for?" inquired one, alluding to the fortress on the isle of St. Margaret.

"To be sure I do," replied mine host; "he's gone to fetch the Governor."

"What, is Monsieur de St. Marc going away then?" asked somebody else.

"Yes!" responded Tirelire; "he has been appointed Governor of the Bastile at Paris."

"By my faith," ejaculated a third, in a tone of dissatisfaction, "there was no occasion to make so much mystery about it! Is this all thou hast to tell us?"

"Perhaps it is, and perhaps it isn't," retorted Tirelire, apparently determined to tantalize them all a little longer, and to let out his secret only a bit at a time; "*some* people are always asking, and never giving in return."

As the individual *some* people alluded to owed a longish score to the bar of "THE GOLDEN BEE," and thought he perceived in this retort a delicate allusion to the same, he prudently with-held the reply upon the tip of his tongue, feeling much relieved at the turn given to the conversation by one of the by-standers putting it to Tirelire whether he had heard who was to be St. Marc's successor as Governor of the Hieres and the Lerins.*

Mine host replied negatively, but with a smirk indicating that though upon *this* point his ignorance was as great as *their's*, he knew something else worth all he had yet told them, and was determined to make the most of it.

This fact striking them all simultaneously, a great deal of skilful generalship was exhibited in order to *draw out* mine host, but like the hedge-hog in an hour of peril, he rolled himself up in his bristles and remained invulnerable to their attacks until a few more *litrons* and chopins had found their way down his "children's" throats, when he condescended once more to unfold himself.

"I shall alter the sign of my house," said he, suddenly arousing himself from what might have been considered a good specimen of a sound nap, but which was only a fit of abstraction.

"What!" exclaimed three or four voices at once; "alter the sign of thy house?"

* The latter are two in number; St. Honorat and St. Margaret.

"Yes!" resumed Tirelire; instead of the "GOLDEN BEE," I shall call it'—

"What! what wilt thou call it?" asked they.

"THE MAN WITH THE IRON MASK!" retorted Tirelire.

"Thou hast reasons then?" observed one.

"Good reasons!" replied the other; "won't he stop here to supper to-night?"

As nobody present could assert that the personage alluded to would not sup that night at the Golden Bee, everybody of course concluded that he would; the pause of astonishment occasioned by this communication was put an end to by one of the party inquiring "*whether the mysterious prisoner was going away with the Governor?*"

"Monseigneur is gone to fetch them both," resumed Tirelire; "they are all three going back to Paris together it seems!"

"And the paper that Ignace Cornu gave thee!" suggested another, determined not to be cheated of a jot of what he considered his companions and himself were entitled to, as a compensation for their extra outlay that morning.

"Oh!" replied he of the Golden Bee; "'tis only a line from *Monsieur le Juge*, bidding me prepare my best room for the visiters."

"For which thou art to be handsomely paid no doubt," hinted one

"'Tisn't likely I am to receive and to treat *distinguished* persons for *nothing*," retorted mine host; "*Monsieur le Juge* pays for all, and the Government pays him! Between both, 'twould be hard indeed if I didn't pick up a few sous!"

"And when dost thou expect thy *distinguished* guests?" asked another.

"At about nine," responded Tirelire; "but bless me! is it so late? Past one! Here! François, François!"

Bawling at the very top of his voice after this individual, who officiated at the *auberge* in half a dozen distinct capacities, the garrulous landlord made a precipitate retreat for the purpose of preparing every thing for the reception of the expected company.

Within an hour after that time, the *secret* entrusted to him was in rapid circulation throughout the village, but it was no longer the stranger of the morning who occupied the public attention, although he *was* the Lieutenant of Police, nor was any importance attached to the arrival of Monsieur de St. Marc; the all-engrossing topic of conversation seemed to be the mysterious personage known only under the name of "The Man with the Iron Mask," and it was to catch a glimpse of him when he should land, that the crowd had assembled as already stated.

Various were the speculations hazarded respecting the identity of this individual, and numerous the stories told of him, those who had heard them before listening with as much avidity as those who heard them now for the first time, the anxiety of all for the arrival of the boat increasing as the hours waned.

"That Pierre Durand is a lucky fellow," remarked one of the group of fishermen that stood on the landing-place; "forty gold pieces! what a wind-fall!"

"Thou hadst a wind-fall thyself, once, Maurice," observed another to the last speaker in a bantering tone.

"A wind-fall indeed!" retorted the fisherman, surlily.

"Tell us about it," exclaimed two or three, ignorant of the circumstance to which their comrade alluded:

"'Tis about twelve years ago," resumed the latter, "and somewhere about this time of the year; I recollect it well, because tunny was scarce that year. Well, as the fish seemed shy about here, I thought I'd try if there were any to be caught amongst the islands; so one morning I put off in my boat, and made direct for St. Margaret's. I don't know why I chose that one more than St. Honorat's; I suppose it was a fatality! I soon picked out a likely place; it was close under the castle, and there I sunk my nets. This took me on till the afternoon, the soundings being new to me, and I was pretty tired by then I'd done, so I laid down in my boat and went to sleep. I don't know how long I slept, but I was startled in the middle of a fine dream by somebody singing! 'There are no angels about here, either,' thinks I, and I rubbed my eyes a bit till I was fairly awake, but the singing went on all the same, and with that the individual began playing on the guitar. He knew how to draw the music out, too, I promise you! When I heard the guitar, says I to myself, 'tisn't an angel, because angels don't play on guitars; must be one of the birds that are caged in the *château*, so I looked about, and right over-head, as high up as I could see, I spied a loop-hole, and a white handkerchief hanging out of it. There's about twenty feet or more of beach between the foot of the tower and the water's edge, and I was anchored as close into shore as I could; but I suppose the poor fellow saw me and wanted to signalize something, so I up with a spare strip of sail-cloth just to let him know I understood the thing. A few minutes after, the handkerchief was pulled in, and the singing and guitar playing went on. I couldn't make it out at all, so after listening awhile, I began to haul my nets, for I wanted to get home! I got more fish that haul than I caught the whole season again; but that's nothing. I stowed 'em away, and was going to heave anchor when I saw the white handkerchief once more; and directly after down came something upon the beach! I leapt out upon the rocks, and so got ashore to see what it was! May I never catch another fish if it wasn't a large silver platter; it weighed heavy I can tell you! It was worth forty gold pieces at the least! I suppose 'tis a present he makes me thought I. Well, I turned it over and over—oh, for the matter of that it was every bit silver—when I saw some writing on it, cut in, like with a knife! It may have been Greek for anything I know, but I was a good deal startled, and didn't know at first what to do, but after a bit I thought I shouldn't be able to get rid of the dish, or to help the poor prisoner, so I'd better leave both where they were. Just as I had made up my mind to this, up comes a sentinel! 'Halloa!' says he; 'what are you doing here, and what have you got there?' Says I, 'I came here to fish for tunny, and I've got a silver dish!' 'You must come with me to the

Governor says he!' Must I, says I again; very well! And so he took me to the *château*, and brought me up before the Governor! When the Governor read what was on the dish, he turned very pale, and looked at me very hard, and asked me my name! Maurice Lefort, Monseigneur, I answered. 'How came you by this dish?' said he. Monseigneur, I found it on the beach! 'Has it been out of your hands since you found it?' No, Monseigneur! And I told him the truth, for the soldier never touched it. With this the Governor wrote something on a piece of paper and handed it to me; 'read that, Maitre Lefort,' said he, fixing his eyes upon me. Please your Governorship, says I, I *can't* read. Read it, read it, cried he, or I'll hang thee within the hour! If your Governorship hanged me *directly* I could'nt save my life by reading this, was my reply. With that he whispered to his adjutant, and then told the sentinel to see me back to my boat. 'Go,' said he; ''tis lucky for *you* you *can't* read! You held your own death-warrant in your hands!' I did'nt want telling twice to sheer off, you may guess; so I soon got back to my boat, and I promise you I've never since put myself in the way of catching silver dishes instead of tunny."

We have taken no note of the various interruptions the fisherman experienced in the course of his recital, which latter marvellously interested the group around him:

"How long has he been a prisoner at the *château, now!*" asked one.

"Why, ever since Monsieur de St. Marc was made Governor of the Hieres! that's going on between seventeen and eighteen years!"

"To be sure," observed a third; "did'nt he bring the Iron Mask with him? God knows from where?"

"God and the government!" remarked a fourth.

"Ah!" chimed in another; "there's *some* secret wrapt up in him, depend on't, or why do they take such precautions to keep everybody clear of him?"

"And then there's his mask," said a fifth.

"Yes!" resumed Maurice; "but that did'nt prevent Fanfinette Anza from seeing his face!"

"And who's she?" inquired another of the bystanders.

"Who?" continued Maurice; "I thought every body knew of *her*?"

"*I* never heard of her before," exclaimed the inquirer, "though I've lived here now going on nine years!"

"Ah, that's true," rejoined Maurice; "I forgot; it happened before thy time! You see that cottage yonder?"

"The one that stands alone, dost thou mean? I do! What of it?"

"Well, that's where Fanfinette used to live with her old father and mother! She was the prettiest lass of the village, I can tell you, and I'm a judge of the sex!"

"I don't doubt it," said the other, perceiving that the old fisherman paused; "but go on; I'm impatient to hear thy story!"

Maurice drew the back of his hand across his mouth, and resumed:

"The Man with the Iron Mask came to these parts better than seventeen years ago, as you all know! and that's about the time

Fanfinette and her old parents were living in yonder cottage. Her mother was bed-ridden, poor thing, and her father was unable to go fishing any more because of a hurt he got in a gale, so he and Fanfinette picked up a living by making nets and tunny-traps; and a poor living it was after all; however, there they lived! Well, one fine morning comes an officer from the castle where the Iron Mask was confined, with a proclamation from *Monsieur le Gouverneur*, offering a ship-load of money to any young girl that would go back with him to the *château* to be the companion of the state-prisoner. A good many offered themselves, but when they learnt that if they went they could'nt come back any more, and would have to remain with him always, day and night, and never go out at all, good night to the ship-load of money; they preferred staying where they were; so at last the officer thought he should have to go back without a cargo! I should tell you that Fanfinette knew all about this, and had returned home, like the rest! Now the officer's way to where he had left his boat—for he did'nt land here—lay in the direction of her cottage; it was very late when he passed it, because he staid to dinner with *Monsieur le Juge*, but late as it was, there was a light burning inside, and as he went by, Fanfinette called him in! How I came to know all about it is because my wife's mother nursed the poor girl on her death-bed, and Fanfinette told her every thing, and my wife's mother told my wife, and my wife told *me!* Well, her father was gone to bed, and so she had a good long talk with the officer without the old man knowing any thing about it! The up-shot of their conversation was, that Fanfinette went away with him in the boat!"

"Well?" ejaculated the impatient inquirer, as Maurice paused to pull up his long boots.

"I don't recollect," continued the fisherman, "how Fanfinette managed to get over the Governor, but I think she took a solemn oath never to divulge what she saw or heard at the *château;* be that as it may, she came home again early next morning with more gold in her hand at once, than she had ever seen all her life! Two or three days after, back comes the officer, and stays all day with *Monsieur le Juge*, and at night takes Fanfinette to the *château* again; the next morning she returns with more gold, and so it went on for a month or more, without the old people suspecting any thing, for she was too wise to shew her louis to them, and if they asked her where she got the money from to pay the doctor that attended her mother, and to buy the things he ordered her to take, she said she had made a friend! But matters could'nt go on so very long; and at last the old man began to think all was'nt right; so one morning when she came home she found him sitting at the cottage door waiting for her! He had seen her leave the boat, and as she could'nt deny that she came from the *château*, she went down on her knees and confessed every thing to her father! The old man tore out his grey hairs by handfuls when he heard her say it was to save him and her mother from starvation that she had sacrificed herself, but after a bit he came round, and promised not to tell mother Auza about it, for Fanfinette was afraid it would kill

her outright! Well, two or three days passed, and old Auza seemed very unhappy—well he might be—but nobody except Fanfinette knew the cause; at last he could'nt bear up any longer, and on the fourth day, whilst the girl was gone to the village, he took a pistol and blew out his brains! Mother Auza heard the report, and though she had'nt left her bed for eight years before, she jumped up to see what was the matter; when she found her old man dead, she gave a loud scream that brought all the neighbours, and down she fell upon his body. It was a shocking sight they say when Fanfinette came home and saw her father and her mother both stiff dead, and what made matters worse she had promised to go to the *château* that night! What to do she did'nt know! Fortunately my wife's mother, who had known the girl from the time she was an infant, happened to be there, and Fanfinette begged her to stop up all night with the corpses, and sent all the other neighbours away! By about dusk the officer was at the water-side waiting for Fanfinette who went to meet him there! She told him how that her father and mother were both dead, and that she could'nt go to the *château* again 'till they were buried, and so the officer was obliged to return alone! On the third day after this, father Auza and his wife were carried out, when Fanfinette fell down in a fit! You see she had kept in her grief till it burst out of itself! Poor thing, she never went out again till she was borne out to be buried! She lingered three days, and my wife's mother tended her till she died! Nearly all the village went to the funeral, but the strangest part of all was that *Monsieur le Juge* and the officer, with two strangers from the *château* attended the church-service and followed the body to the grave!"

"But didst thou not say that Fanfinette saw the face of——"

"Oh, yes, I forgot that!" said Maurice; "my mother-in-law you see is rather inquisitive, and when she found that Fanfinette made a friend of her, she asked her if she had ever seen her lover's face—for it seems they loved each other at last—Fanfinette said yes, she *had* seen it *once*—only once—and then only for a minute! With that she held out a louis-d'or, and pointing to the effigy upon it, said: 'Mother Françoise, that's his likeness!' Then Mother Françoise knew that she was mad, because you see it was the face of Louis Quatorze, and every body knows he's alive in Paris, and was never in the *château* yonder in his life!"

"And what became of all her money?" inquired the former speaker.

"Why she left it in the hands of *Monsieur le Curé* for the use of the poor," replied Maurice, suddenly shading his eyes with his hand; "but I do think," continued he, "that they're coming at last! Is'nt that Pierre Durand's boat?"

"Aye, aye, Maurice," ejaculated one of the group in answer; "that's it sure enough!"

The boat had in fact become visible to all the spectators at once, as it abruptly emerged from behind one of the rocky promontories that together formed the channel to the Isle of St. Margaret; every voice was instantly hushed, and even the respiration of the lookers-on was

suspended as they watched the slow progress of the tiny bark towards the shore, now rising now falling on the undulations of the sea, more polished than a mirror, and refulgent with the chamelion-tints of an autumnal sun-set reflected from the cloudless vault of a southern sky; under the skilful guidance of Pierre Durand, seconded by a light breeze, it soon reached the shore, when a simultaneous murmur pervaded the various groups congregated, heads being thrust forwards, and fingers directed to the one object that for the time absorbed all their attention.

CHAPTER II.

THE REPAST. AN INTRUDER.

Besides Pierre Durand, the boat contained five individuals, namely, two officers belonging to the garrison of the *château*, Monsieur de St. Marc the Governor, Monseigneur D'Argenson, and the mysterious prisoner seated between the two latter.

The whole party, with the exception of Durand, were enveloped in military cloaks, and wore their beavers low down over their foreheads, so that in the dusk, it was difficult to distinguish one personage from the other; when, however, the honest fisherman had cast his kedge overboard, and brought his small vessel alongside the flat rock already mentioned, a low but perfectly audible whisper circulated rapidly from mouth to mouth, all eyes becoming riveted upon the form of the prisoner as the words "*there he is! there he is!*" escaped the lips of those who were fortunate enough to catch the first sight of him.

Immediately upon the "*Rose of Provençe*"—this was the name by which Pierre Durand's skiff was christened—coming to an anchor, the two officers rose from their seats in the fore-part of the bark and leaped ashore, pushing aside the crowd in order to clear the landing-place, and ranging themselves, one on each side of it, with *swords drawn* and *beavers doffed*; D'Argenson followed them, uncovering as the prisoner stepped on the rock, as did St. Marc, who landed last, and in this order they began advancing along the narrow path leading into the village.

The principal personage was a man of tall stature, proud and erect in his gait, and judging from those portions of his person not concealed by his cloak, extremely well-made; his beaver was feathered round the edges, and from beneath it his dark hair fell upon his

shoulders in long ringlets; his face was entirely hidden beneath a closely-fitting mask of black velvet, adjusted in such a manner as not to leave visible the slightest portion of his features, but having two apertures for the eyes, two smaller ones for his nostrils, and a third for his mouth, which latter, by a mechanical contrivance, remained perfectly free; his hands were very white, and like his feet, remarkably small and well-formed, these last being set off to great advantage by the high-heeled buff boots of the period, but from which a close observer would have remarked the absence of spurs.

Mid way between the landing place and the village the party was met by the local authorities, and some dozen or two soldiers constituting the whole armed force of the place; forming into a double line they presented arms to the mysterious stranger, who gracefully returned their salute, and escorted by this *guard of honour*, soon reached the "GOLDEN BEE," where Papa Tirelire was in waiting to receive his distinguished visiters, having, to pay them due respect, assumed a flowing periwig fresh from the hands of the village barber, who held it from his late *patron* in Paris as being the identical periwig that had "belonged to Corneille, or to Racine, or to Molière, he didn't know which, but to one of them he was sure."

As soon as Monseigneur D'Argenson and his party were well on their way to the *auberge*, Pierre Durand, who had now landed, was besieged by questions relatively to his employment that day: the honest fisherman candidly told his friends all that had occurred.

The Lieutenant of Police ordered him first to direct his course to the isle of St. Margaret, which they reached without another word escaping his lips; then upon landing he told him to stay where he was until *he* (D'Argenson) should return; this he had done, remaining the whole of the day, without seeing anybody, until towards evening, when the party he brought back with him entered his boat in the same order as they left it, the journey from the isle being performed in the same silence as the journey thither, never having been broken but twice; once when he received instructions to steer for Cape le Gros, and again when D'Argenson placing forty gold pieces in his hand said "*there's thy hire!*"

"I'm forty louis the richer for the trip," added Pierre, "but if I ever ship such a cargo again for twice that sum, may I be—"

We cannot conclude the sentence because the fisherman's wish was peculiar, and conveyed, moreover, in a *patois* that will not bear translation; let it be understood, however, that he made himself perfectly intelligible to his friends, who having congratulated him upon his good fortune, began to throw out strong hints of their willingness to pledge him their further good-wishes in a few *litrons* of Papa Tirelire's wine, to be paid for out of the forty gold pieces, to which arrangement Pierre Durand having consented, the friends forthwith adjourned to the *snuggery* of "THE GOLDEN BEE," (thenceforth to be called "the Man with the Iron-Mask,") where they found more friends who had followed the mysterious prisoner thither, and were awaiting his departure with as much anxiety as they had looked forward to his arrival.

We have already stated that mine host was in waiting to receive his guests of the *château*, for whom he had not only prepared a repast unprecedented in the gastronomic annals of "The Golden Bee," and laid out for the occasion the very best chamber it boasted, but even manufactured a speech in which he intended to express his high sense of the honour conferred upon him, and to inform his illustrious visiters "of the mode in which he purposed to immortalize their advent;" this he would doubtless have delivered upon the thresh-hold of his door in order that not his guests alone but his neighbours might have the benefit of his eloquence, if D'Argenson, entertaining some suspicion of his intention, had not very unceremoniously silenced him ere he had uttered the first sentence of his exordium, and pushing past him, followed by the prisoner, St. Marc and the two officers, made the best of his way to the apartment provided for them.

Much mortified, but not in the least discouraged, Tirelire brought up the rear to the door of the banquet-chamber, where his further progress was barred by the two officers, who, in reply to his earnest entreaties to be permitted the extreme honour of waiting upon his *distinguished visiters*, intimated to him that his services would be dispensed with, as Monsieur de St. Marc usually performed that office himself, and would officiate upon the present occasion.

Obliged to submit, though extremely disappointed, Papa Tirelire returned to fulfil his duties as host of the "Golden Bee," and was soon absorbed in the mysteries of dishing up the various delicacies he had prepared for his "*illustrious guests*;" in his culinary laboratory we will leave him to take a peep at the scene in the "*banqueting-room.*"

Three individuals only had entered it, namely; the unknown, Monsieur de St. Marc, and Monseigneur D'Argenson, and of these one alone, the first-mentioned, was seated at the table, although covers for three were laid, St. Marc having taken up his position just within-side the door, whilst D'Argenson stood behind the chair of the prisoner; both himself and his colleague were uncovered.

Upon the repast being announced as ready, one of the officers outside received the viands from the hands of mine host, and passed them to Monsieur de St. Marc who placed them upon the table, D'Argenson assisting the prisoner to such as the latter indicated by a sign that he preferred and pouring him out to drink, St. Marc clearing as occasion required, the whole being performed without the parties exchanging a single word.

The unknown had disencumbered himself of his cloak and his beaver, though he retained his mask, even during the meal; his costume, remarkable for its elegance, displayed his fine person to great advantage, but lacked the customary appendage of the period, namely, the small-sword; his coat, extremely large in the skirts and the wrists, was of the finest velvet, in colour a deep puce, and profusely laced, and his under-coat, descending very low, of white satin brocade of elaborate workmanship; his trunks hung loosely to below the knee, and were edged with the finest point lace, a span in

depth, his ruffles and cravat being also of lace of the rarest texture, for which he had a great passion; his face was entirely hidden, even to his forehead, beneath the mask which the popular belief of the time asserted to be of iron, and which belief tradition has handed down to the present day, though this frightful disguise was really of black velvet as before described, fitting quite close, and fastening behind by small steel springs, the under portion being so constructed as to leave the jaw full room to perform its functions.

The repast was nearly ended when the rumbling of a heavy carriage resounded just beneath the window of the apartment; D'Argenson exchanged a significant glance with St. Marc, and looked at his watch; it wanted a quarter of ten.

"Go, Sieur Governor," said he addressing the last named personage; "go, get some refreshment, thou and thy two aide-de-camps; thou hast a long journey before thee, and 'tis within a quarter of the hour of departure."

St. Marc bowed and left the room.

"Did I hear aright, Monseigneur?" inquired the mysterious prisoner somewhat surprised; "do we not remain here to night?"

"No, *Highness!*" responded the Lieutenant of Police.

"And whither then do we journey?" resumed the former; "there surely is no necessity for keeping me in the dark on this point! Am I not a prisoner?"

The voice of the unknown was deep and melodious, but so replete with sadness it was painful to hear him speak, and this last sentence was conveyed in a tone of such bitterness of heart, that even the iron-nerved man at his elbow appeared discomposed, though only for a moment:

"Highness," replied he, "we are bound for Paris!"

The prisoner shuddered.

"Captivity for captivity," he exclaimed, speaking to himself; "always captivity! My God, my God! what have *I* done that this fate should be mine! Oh, Monseigneur, tell me, will this last for ever!"

"No, Highness," retorted he of the iron soul, with strange emphasis.

"True; true!" ejaculated the other; "I cannot *live for ever*! Oh, for one year, one month, nay a day, or even one single hour of liberty! To be freed for the shortest space from this odious disguise; from the lynx-eyed surveillance of my jailers! What is life to *me* upon terms like those by which I hold the tenure of existence? Would that I had never discovered the fatal secret of my birth, I might then have been as other men are! Great God what misery is mine!"

The unfortunate clasped his hands in an agony of grief and remained some moments silent, his breast heaving with the violence of the struggle within; at length he again spoke, but still as though no one were present.

"To Paris! Paris, the city of pleasure, of wealth, of happiness, and of beauty! Pleasure that I can never share, happiness that I can never enjoy, beauty that I cannot look upon! Why, why, has not solitude

driven me mad! Why have I feelings, sentiments, and passions strong as other men have, I who am like no other man? I know of friendship nothing save the name; nothing of love save its instincts? Where is the being that ever clung to me and called me friend? Where the ties that bind man to his fellow-man! They exist not for me! I am alone in the world! A walking mystery! A fable in the eyes of some, a criminal in the eyes of others! Yet is no crime mine! Oh, preserve me Heaven from cursing my mother!"

Another pause ensued, longer than the preceding one, during which the captive appeared plunged in reflection; all at once he started up, causing D'Argenson who had withdrawn to the window, to turn suddenly round and lay his hand upon his sword:

"Oh, fear not," continued the unknown, making a sign to his guardian to sheathe his weapon; "I can do thee no harm! nor wish to break through the restraint imposed upon me! A thought has struck me! We are going to Paris! We shall be near the King! Wilt thou be the bearer of a message from me to *him?*"

"I am bound to fulfil every wish that your Highness may express," returned the Lieutenant of Police gravely, at the same time inclining his body profoundly.

"The few years I have yet to live, Monseigneur," resumed the captive, "I would pass in freedom To ensure myself this boon I will subscribe to any terms! Thou must see the King! Thou *will* see him, wilt thou not? Thou wilt tell him, from me, that my lips shall be sealed upon that fatal secret by oaths the most solemn! That no circumstance shall wring it from me, nor even on my death-bed shall priest ever know it! Let him banish me to a distant clime where no recognition of my features can cause him fear! I will be content to live in obscurity so that I be but free! So that I can only walk abroad and do as other men do! For wealth I care not; rank I will abjure! But I would eat, drink, sleep and wake unwatched! I would enjoy the privilege of either living in solitude, or in companionship with my fellow-men! I would be freed from a disguise that is hateful, making me the bug-bear of children, and the fable of old women! Tell all this to the King, Monseigneur! The same blood flows in our veins! Nature will speak for me! He will listen to thee! He will grant my request, and I shall die with a benediction upon my lips for him and his descendants!"

"I promise to fulfil your Highness' commands," replied D'Argenson again bowing profoundly.

At this moment an uncommon noise, as of some heavy body falling, caused the speaker and the unknown to start; turning their eyes in the direction whence they supposed the sound to proceed, they beheld the door of a closet in the wainscot wide open, and a man prostrate, with his face on the floor; to leap to the spot, sword in hand, and seize the unfortunate listener by the collar, was for the Lieutenant of Police the work of half a second, and dragging him up he would have inflicted summary justice upon him had not his arm been staid

by the principal personage, whilst at the same time a lachrymose voice exclaimed:

"*Misèricorde! Misèricorde!* 'Tis I Monseigneur, Ignace Cornu!"

Between the confusion caused by the untoward accident which had resulted in his detection, and his terror for the consequences of his imprudence, the face of this semi-official assumed an expression so ludicrous that under any other circumstances the gravity even of the Lieutenant of Police would not have been proof against it; in this instance, however, it caused his brow to lower more than usual, for the unlucky wight had committed a crime punishable by death, though he was not perhaps aware of the fact.

"Miscreant!" exclaimed D'Argenson; "how camest thou here?"

"Mercy! Mercy! Monseigneur!" cried Cornu, imploringly; I did'nt intend any harm! 'twas only curiosity!"

"*Ventre bleu!* thou shalt pay for thy curiosity!" retorted D'Argenson; "I will not take thy *life*, thou art too pitiful an object for me to kill! But—"

"Indeed, indeed, Monseigneur I meant no harm," reiterated the unhappy wretch, interrupting the speaker and quailing before his stern gaze.

"Thou hast heard all, fool," shouted the Lieutenant of Police, threatening him.

"Not a word—not a syllable"—stammered Cornu; "*misèricorde*, Monseigneur, I'm only clerk to the civil authorities."

"Peace, varlet! *Morbleu!* I'll teach thee better manners for the future!"

The entry of St. Marc abruptly put an end to this unexpected colloquy; as soon as D'Argenson saw him, he bade him *fetch* materials for writing a letter, and order a guard to the door of the inn, under the eye of *Monsieur le Juge* himself; whilst he was absent on his mission, D'Argenson paced the room in a perfect fury, muttering oaths between his teeth, and paying no attention to the tears and entreaties of Cornu, who beat his breast and tore his hair, in an agony of bewilderment at this unlooked for termination of his adventure; the unknown had resumed his seat, and remained passive.

St. Marc now re-entered with the articles required, which he placed upon the table; D'Argenson sat down and rapidly wrote a few words on a piece of paper, folding the same up and sealing it, and addressing it to the Major at the *château* of St. Margaret's: this done he inquired of St. Marc if the men were below; the Governor replied in the affirmative; he then seized Cornu by the collar, and in spite of his struggles and screams and entreaties for mercy, dragged him down stairs, where he found the functionary in waiting.

"But what has Ignace done, Monseigneur?" asked he, seeing his clerk in so deplorable a condition.

"Oh, *Monsieur le Juge*," whimpered Cornu, "do intercede for me! I only hid myself in the closet up stairs to hear what was said, but indeed, indeed I did not hear a word!"

"I hope Monseigneur does not think *I* had any thing to do with

the traitor," exclaimed Papa Tirelire, who, with a number of his customers had gathered round the group; "he owes me fifteen livres for *petit verres*, and if your excellency only gives the word I'll forbid him the house as soon as he has paid his score!"

"There will be no necessity for that," observed D'Argenson with a sinister smile, and he whispered to one of the soldiers, who immediately disappeared. "Here, *Monsieur le Juge*," continued he, "see this safely delivered, *thyself*; to thee I commit the safe keeping of Monsieur Ignace Cornu!"

The judicial functionary knew too well the nature of the offence committed by his clerk to hope that any intercession on *his* part would move D'Argenson in the unlucky wight's favour; still, he determined not to let him go without one effort to save him:

"I beg Monseigneur to shew him a little mercy," said he; "he is the only support of an aged mother—his whole pittance goes towards——"

"*Monsieur le Juge*," exclaimed D'Argenson, interrupting him, and speaking in a tone that made every one who heard him tremble from head to foot, "all thou hast to do is to execute my orders! I know *my* business: see I have not cause to believe thee unfit for thine! Another word in his favour, and I will have him strung up at the door before I depart hence! Bind his arms and gag him!"

This last command was addressed to the soldier who had recently been despatched on a message, and was now returned, and who with the assistance of his comrades, proceeded to execute D'Argenson's orders, the unlucky Ignace roaring and sputtering and kicking might and main, but all to no purpose; he was gagged and bound, and delivered over to the custody of the chief magistrate and a picket of the guard.

"Here are twenty louis," said D'Argenson, handing that official the sum mentioned: "'twill defray the hire of the boat to the *château*! Away with him, and let not the gag be removed until he is safe in the keeping of the major! I shall hear how my orders have been obeyed!"

With this he made the best of his way back to the apartment he had just quitted.

Shortly, that is to say within ten minutes after these occurrences, a lumbering carriage was driven out of the court-yard of the *Golden Bee*, "and drew up before the door; into it got Monseigneur D'Argenson, immediately followed by the mysterious prisoner, and Monsieur de St. Marc, one of the officers bringing up the rear; the postilions had, apparently, previously received their instructions, for without a word being said they drove rapidly off towards Antibes, the second officer following, mounted on D'Argenson's horse.

"Well, they're gone at last," ruminated Papa Tirelire, when the vehicle was fairly out of hearing; "'tis a strange affair!"

"And that poor Ignace!" observed a by-stander.

"And the fifteen livres that he owes me," chimed in mine host; "but never mind," added he, "I'll forgive him on account of his misfortune."

The neighbours all loudly expressed their admiration of the landlord's generosity, much to his embarrassment, for he was mentally, at that precise moment enumerating the various items which he could, without fear of detection, overcharge, to make up the sum—*plus* an odd crown—in the bill he was about to send in to the presiding authorities; however, let that pass; upon this point all landlords are tender.

The object of their solicitude, had, in the interim, been conveyed, gagged and bound, to the guard-house, previously to being transferred to the *château*; and having seen him secured under lock and key, the worthy magistrate to whose custody he had been confided, returned to the *auberge* in order to engage a boat to convey him away.

Now Ignace Cornu was no favourite amongst his fellow-villagers on account of the degree of importance he assumed over them, presuming upon his position as chief clerk to the local authorities, an importance that proved offensive to the majority; there were some, indeed, who, remembering his self-sufficiency in the early part of the day, thought him rightly served, still not one amongst them would have done him an injury, whilst many of them, perhaps the greater number, felt actually sorry for his present mis-hap, especially when, upon discussing the nature of his offence, they found that they had themselves sinned in like manner that day, though their inquisitiveness had not carried them beyond the limits of prudence; then, again, they argued, that his temerity had for its object the obtaining some kind of clue to an important secret, which he doubtless intended to communicate to them in proper time and place, hence they began to look upon him as a martyr in the public cause, until, at length, excited by the discussion and the numerous potations that qualified it, a question arose as to the policy of rescuing him from his fate, some even proposing to head a party to storm the guard-house and set him free.

In the heat of their argument the magistrate arrived for the purpose already mentioned, but notwithstanding the tempting offer of the twenty louis to whomsoever would undertake to convey the prisoner away, not a boat was to be had—they were all wanted by their owners—"besides," observed Pierre Durand, "*we* are not *recors* of the police; if Monseigneur D'Argenson had dirty work to do, why did'nt he bring his *mouchards* with him?" to which the crowd responded, "ah, why?"

Being himself inclined to favour Ignace, the worthy magistrate, winking at this domestic sedition, and not deeming proper to exercise his authority and compel any one of them to do "*King's service*" against his inclination, returned to the guard-house, where, for the present, we will leave him and Ignace to follow the "Man with the Iron Mask."

CHAPTER III.

THE JOURNEY, THE ARRIVAL, AND THE INSTALLATION.

ALTHOUGH there is no necessity for us to accompany the travellers stage by stage to Paris, in which city they arrived before noon of the morning of the seventh day after their departure from Antibes, it behoves us, as historical chroniclers, to narrate certain incidents that occurred on the way, and the measures adopted for the strict preservation of the masked prisoner's incognito.

On reaching the last-mentioned place, D'Argenson alighted, his purpose being to precede the vehicle on horse-back in order to secure relays, and as it was necessary that he should be always a few stages in advance, he arranged that the prisoner, with St. Marc and his subordinates should not resume their journey until an hour or two after day-break; the prisoner was, therefore, conducted with as much secrecy as possible, and with the same formalities as had been hitherto observed, into the best sleeping apartment in the "VILLE DE TOULON," —the name of the inn, at which they put up—the two officers mounting guard outside the door, and St. Marc shutting himself up with the unknown.

Before he departed, D'Argenson took advantage of an opportunity to draw St. Marc aside.

"Thou knowest what I have told thee," said he to him in a whisper; "let him not out of thy sight *for one moment, upon any pretext whatsoever!* He must not exchange a word with any one, and should he attempt to uncover his face whilst on the road, or on his passage to and from the inns at which thou wilt stop, *instantly despatch him!*"*

St. Marc bowed his head in token of submission, at the same time laying his hand significantly upon one of a brace of pistols concealed in his belt; the Lieutenant of Police nodded, and with a respectful obeisance to the prisoner, withdrew: shortly after, the loud clatter of his horse's hoofs announced that he had resumed his journey.

In spite, however, of the extreme precautions that D'Argenson had taken to conceal the arrival of his prisoner, and to prevent the circumstance from becoming noised abroad, it very soon formed the topic of conversation amongst the attendants who had been summoned to prepare his apartment, and of the ostlers and stable-boys who took charge of the vehicle, and very soon, notwithstanding the extreme lateness of the hour, the news travelled from *them* to such few of their especial friends who lived handiest, and whom they were willing to indulge with a sight of this incomprehensible personage at the hour of his departure on the morrow; hence was it not surprising that "LA VILLE DE TOULON," should have been in an unusual

* This is an historical fact, consigned in *all the records of the period*, and particularly insisted upon by Voltaire.

ferment the whole night, nor that, long before day-break, a considerable concourse of the worthy citizens should have assembled about the door of the inn, anxious to catch a passing glimpse of *him* whose mysterious existence amounted almost to a fable, and whose melancholy destiny formed the subject of many a romance familiar to their ears from infancy.

Meanwhile, had any of the anxious crowd been able to look into the chamber where the object of this general solicitude was confined, they would have beheld him lying, dressed, upon the bed, buried in sleep—though for this fact they would have had no other voucher than his regular breathing—*for his face was still masked*;—seated at his bed-side, was Monsieur de St. Marc, watching every respiration, or sometimes pacing the room with a firm, measured step, occasionally assuring himself that his subordinates outside likewise performed their duty as vigilant guardians, or again, upon the slightest movement on the part of his charge bounding to his side with the agility and the velvet tread of the cat, ready to defeat any attempt he might make to break through the stringent restrictions imposed upon him.

The slight repast of which he partook before his departure, was served with similar precautions to those observed on the previous evening, the viands being brought to the door by mine host himself, where they were received by one of the officers on duty, and thence handed in to St. Marc, who waited upon the prisoner with the submissiveness of the veriest menial, not even sitting down in his presence, nor venturing to address him a word, the latter observing the strictest silence also, and expressing his wishes by signs.

The Governor appeared annoyed on perceiving the crowd assembled to see him and his captive depart, manifesting his displeasure by an angry frown at mine host, and by addressing to him the epithet, "*babbling fool*," as he stepped past him into the carriage, into which the unknown had preceded him, seemingly without noticing the lookers-on; the two officers followed, uncovered, taking their seat in silence, and the postilions, without receiving any instructions, immediately drove off, taking the main road to Digne; their route to Paris being traced thence, by way of Grenoble and Lyons.

The travellers did not stop again—except to take their meals—until they got to Paris, the same precautions being observed throughout the journey from first to last; still, whithersoever they went, the fame of their arrival seemed to precede them, and as the carriage whirled along, many an inquisitive head was stretched out to catch a glimpse of the mysterious personage within, and many a fair hand waved in token of sympathy for his misfortunes.

On reaching the Bastile, Monsieur de St. Marc, its newly-appointed Governor, found the whole of the garrison under arms in the Court of the Elm, in readiness to receive him, the staff headed by Monseigneur D'Argenson, Lieutenant of the Police, as proxy for his Majesty, and upon whom devolved the office of installing him in his office.

The coach having been driven into the centre of the court-yard,

the two officers alighted, the masked prisoner coming after them, and St. Marc last; D'Argenson advanced to meet him, being followed by the officers forming the Governor's staff, the chaplain bearing the cross, and his assistants, the four *porte-clefs* and the remainder of the subordinate functionaries, who formed in separate groups according to their stations, the soldiers being drawn up rank and file from the great outer gate to the principal entrance itself. Nearest to the Lieutenant of Police stood the Major, Monsieur de Joncas, officiating as Lieutenant-Governor, the aide-Major, as Lieutenant for the King, and the Captain of the Guard, each bearing a silver salver; on the first lay the official keys of the Bastile, on the second, a parchment, sealed with the Great Seal, and on the third, a large book, bound in vellum, having three clasps, the key whereof was deposited upon the cover: as soon as St. Marc set foot to the ground—which he did almost at the same time as the prisoner—the soldiers presented arms, the drums beating, and the officers, including D'Argenson himself, *uncovering and making the military salute.*

"Monsieur de St. Marc," said the latter, as soon as silence was re-established, "allow me, in the name of our well-beloved Monarch His Most Christian Majesty Louis Quatorze, whose representative I am, to congratulate you upon your appointment to the Governorship of this fortress; an office which you shall have and hold so long as you shall worthily fulfil the very important duties that will now devolve upon you, and shall keep your faith and loyalty as a good and devoted subject of his Majesty. You have already taken the oath of allegiance to him, but that oath I now call upon you to renew in the presence of me, his Lieutenant of Police, of these gentlemen, your colleagues, and of these soldiers, all of them his Majesty's trusty servants and liege subjects!"

"I do renew it, solemnly!" responded St. Marc, in a firm, loud voice, and elevating his right hand at the same moment; "do ye all witness it!"

"Take, then, this book, Sieur Governor," resumed D'Argenson, beckoning to him the Captain of the Guard, who bore it, and who, advancing, presented the same to St. Marc; "it contains the *consigne* of the *château*, together with various rules and regulations for your guidance, which you must promise, here, to follow strictly to the letter, or suffer the penalty disobedience will entail"

St. Marc took the small key that lay upon the book, and unlocked the clasps; this done, he deposited the key again upon the salver, and opened the book promiscuously, just glancing his eye over the page that first presented itself, taking, by this act, formal cognizance of its contents; then, the officer bowed, and passed over to his *left hand* St. Marc saying:

"I do promise, most solemnly, to do this—do ye all bear testimony to the fact!"

D'Argenson next called to him the Major, who, advancing in like manner, presented the official keys to St. Marc, the Lieutenant of Police continuing his charge:

"Accept then, Sieur Governor, the keys of this *château!* You, must swear to defend it to the last drop of your blood, and never to

surrender possession of those keys to an enemy of His Most Christian Majesty's, whatever the extremity to which you may be driven; remembering, however, that the same hand which confers upon you the care of this most important post, can at any time deprive you of the same!"

St. Marc seized the keys with his right hand, and raised them high over his head, saying:

"With these keys I accept the honour of defending this fortress to the last extremity, and do here swear never to surrender possession of it to an enemy of His Most Christian Majesty's, but rather to die upon its ruins! To this also do ye all bear witness!"

He then replaced the keys upon the salver, and the Major took up his position to the left of the Captain of the Guard.

"But one duty, then, remains to me to perform, Sieur Governor," resumed D'Argenson, taking the sealed parchment from the Aide-Major; "it is to place you in possession of this, His Majesty's warrant, confirming you in your new appointment, which I wish you health to enjoy many years! His trust could not have been confided to worthier hands!"

The new Governor raised the document to his lips, and having kissed it respectfully, replaced it on the salver, the bearer passing to his right, where he remained until the close of the ceremony, when he took precedence of the others; as this officer fell in, St. Marc, addressing D'Argenson, said:

"Monseigneur, I am proud of the distinction His Majesty has condescended to confer upon me, and shall lose no opportunity of proving my zeal in his service, and showing myself worthy of his confidence! Will you, Monseigneur, allow me the honour of embracing you!"

So saying, these two dignitaries advanced, with open arms, one step towards each other, St. Marc kissing the Lieutenant of Police upon each cheek, the latter returning the compliment, after which D'Argenson faced the group of officers, and addressed them:

"Messieurs," said he, "behold your new Governor! Like yourselves, he is the servant of his Majesty whom you will serve in henceforward obeying Monsieur de St. Marc!"

"*Vive Louis Quatorze! Vive Monsieur le Gouverneur!*" resounded from every side, the assistants emulating one another who should express his loyalty the loudest, but a close observer would have perceived that at mention of the monarch's name, the masked prisoner became much disturbed.

As soon as the shouts had subsided, St. Marc proceeded to embrace the other military functionaries of the fortress, the officers of the staff coming first, and next to them the officers and sub-officers of the garrison down to the corporals; the civilians, however, were not included in this ceremonial, of which they remained uninterested spectators; as each received the fraternal salute, he fell back into his rank, the superior functionaries forming in a group behind St. Marc, in advance of whom D'Argenson still remained to head the march into the *château*, which took place in the following order, through the double rank of soldiers, all with arms presented.

The Lieutenant of Police and two officers; the Governor side by side with the masked prisoner, followed by the two officers who had come with him from the castle of St. Margaret; next, the *Aide-Major* bearing the sealed parchment, then the *Major* with the official keys, and thirdly the Captain of the Guard carrying the book of the "*consigne du château;*" lastly, the chaplain and his assistants; the rear being brought up by the remaining officers of the Bastile who were off duty, the civil functionaries and the turnkeys; but of all these, only D'Argenson, St. Marc, the prisoner and the two officers entered the Council-chamber, the others not going beyond the first inner *corps-de-garde.*

A low, animated conversation passed in the council-chamber between D'Argenson and St. Marc, *which* terminated, the latter opened a large book that lay upon the table, and having inscribed on the page the number of the folio, namely, ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY, wrote for some length of time thereon under the dictation of D'Argenson, though not a word reached the ears of the prisoner, notwithstanding that he formed the subject of the entry; when it was completed, St. Marc closed the book, locked the clasps, and put the key into his pocket; the Lieutenant of Police then bade the two officers remain where they were, and making a low bow to the prisoner, intimated that he should follow him, and led the way out of the apartment, St. Marc coming last.

Their destination was Number Four in the Bertaudière Tower.

"Highness," said D'Argenson to the prisoner on entering, "this is your apartment! As heretofore, Monsieur de St Marc will wait upon you! As heretofore, you shall have all that you desire; short of liberty, nothing shall be denied you! His Majesty has commanded that your slightest wish be instantly obeyed."

"This then, is to be my tomb!" exclaimed the prisoner, sinking into a chair; "have you, Monseigneur, fulfilled your promise, and made known my request to the King?"

"Highness," responded the Lieutenant of Police, "His Majesty remains inexorable!"

"Surely His Majesty does not fear me?" observed the other sarcastically; "eh, Monseigneur?"

"His Majesty did not condescend to inform me," was the rejoinder, accompanied by a submissive crouch.

"Indeed!" resumed the captive; "why does not the King take my life at once? Death would be preferable, far, to this never-ending captivity!"

"His Majesty does not seek your life, Highness!"

"And yet he condemns me to a living death? Why am I thus removed from prison to prison? Made, too, a public spectacle? Is my person safer *here?* Could not I have died at St. Margaret's or at Pignerol? What does it avail him to deprive me of liberty for the few years I have to live? The days of family wars are past! Besides, did not I long ago abjure my birth-right to save our mother's honor? And what asked I in return? Not a diadem! not a title! not wealth! but

a brother's affection, liberty and obscurity! But what have I found instead? Deceit, cruelty, breach of faith, solitary confinement, hopes held out that were never intended to be fulfilled, not to speak of this frightful disguise!"

"If His Majesty had nothing to apprehend from your Highness," observed D'Argenson, breaking the pause that followed this ebullition of bitter thought, "he had, perhaps, cause to fear the intriguers by which your Highness would have been surrounded, and who would not have failed to take advantage of your inexperience to attain their own ends!"

"Peace, executioner?" exclaimed the prisoner, suddenly starting to his feet, proudly erect; "well art thou fitted, like this reptile here" —this was addressed to St. Marc—"to do the bidding of thy tyrant master."

"Highness!" remonstrated D'Argenson; "this is treason."

"Call it treason, if thou wilt," continued the former; "and publish it if thou wilt! But thy master has committed treason worse than this! By right of nature I am his elder, and by right of law his king, and against both nature and the law has he sinned! 'Tis not the designs of intriguers that he feared, for he would still have surrounded me with spies to report my every word and action! No! He feared and still fears that these features should betray the secret of my parentage, and bring odium upon his name for his cruelty towards me! Whilst he holds me in bondage—cut off entirely from mankind—he knows our secret cannot transpire! Alas! Alas! I feel there is no longer hope!"

The unknown, overcome by the bitterness of his anguish, sank into his chair, and sobbed aloud.

Some time passed thus, D'Argenson exchanging rapid signs and glances with St. Marc; at last the former once more addressed the captive.

"Highness," observed he, "there remains for me only to renew the injunctions which have hitherto been insisted upon, and will be continued henceforward! Your Highness will see only *Monsieur le Governeur*, *Monsieur le Medeçin* of the *château*, and the chaplain; the first, at least three times a day, the two others only when your Highness expresses a wish to see them; *Monsieur le Gouverneur* will remain in your Highness' apartment on such occasions! If your Highness should desire to take the air, *Monsieur le Gouverneur* is commanded to allow your Highness to choose for a promenade either the platform of the *château* or the bastion, and he is to accompany you in person, without restricting your Highness to any particular hour, and without limiting the duration of your promenade!"

"I ought to feel grateful to His Majesty for granting me so precious a privilege!" retorted the prisoner bitterly; "but we quitted St. Margaret's in haste, and I perceive that my wardrobe has been forgotten!"

"Your Highness will be furnished with apparel entirely new! The inconvenience of removing hither your Highness' wardrobe and other effects from St. Margaret's, rendered it necessary to destroy the same! Monsieur de St. Marc and myself performed that duty before our departure!"

This was said with great deliberation, the Lieutenant of Police speaking with a degree of respect even more marked than usual; but there was in his tone something so peculiar, it was easy to perceive that he did not address his prisoner thus without design.

"But my books! my crayons! my guitar!" exclaimed the latter, clinging to the mute friends that had cheered his solitude; "these you did not destroy?"

"Every thing, Highness!" was the imperturbable rejoinder; "but others shall be——"

"Thus then," ejaculated the unknown, interrupting the speaker; "thus is every vestige of my existence to be obliterated! My destiny is, to pass amongst men, and away from the earth like a shadow, leaving no trace of my passage behind! Oh inhumanity! But there is One above will pity me, and avenge my wrongs! Louis is great, he is powerful, but their exists a Power greater and mightier than his! Let the King dread his wrath!"

"Has your Highness any commands to His Majesty?" inquired D'Argenson, unmoved.

"Yes!" cried the unknown, with fierce energy suddenly kindled; "tell Louis that in the bitterness of my soul I have cursed him! Let that thought haunt him daily, hourly, to the last moment of his life! And may my malediction light not upon him alone but upon his descendants! May every hope dearest to his heart be blighted in the bud! May his ambition be frustrated of its object, and the canker of disappointment eat into his very soul! May he live to see his enemies flourish, and himself kingdomless! May he live to be like me, alone in the world with sorrow! Friendless and childless! May his children drop off one by one, like rotten branches from a tree, until not one remains to sooth his death-bed pillow! And may misfortune attend their descendants, until they are extirpated from that kingdom and inheritance which he has usurped from me! All this tell the King my brother, and that I will re-iterate my malediction even on my death-bed!"*

* Louis Quatorze survived the whole of his family, every member of which died prematurely; his consort, aged 45, and his only son, aged 51, first; next, and within a year after the decease of the latter, his grandson, the Dauphin Duke of Burgundy, the Dauphine his wife, and their eldest son, the Duke of Britanny, who were all interred in the same tomb at St. Denis. in April, 1712; the youngest of their children, who ascended the throne as Louis XV. was in his infancy extremely sickly, so much so that his life was long despaired of. The Duke of Berri, brother to the Duke of Burgundy, died in 1713, and was, with his infant daughter, consigned to the same grave.

Voltaire says "so deeply was this complication of domestic misfortunes felt, that during the minority of Louis XV. few spoke of the circumstance without shedding tears."

By the Queen, his consort, Louis XIV. had, besides Monseigneur, two sons and three daughters, who died young, whilst of all his natural children, only two died in their infancy; the remaining eight lived and were legitimated, five leaving offspring. He had also, by a young lady attached to the service of Madame de Montespan, a daughter who was never acknowledged, but whom he married to one Sieur de la Queue, a gentleman residing within a few leagues of Versailles. Another girl, whom he placed in a convent, endowing her with twenty thousand livres, was likewise strongly suspected to be a daughter of his, but by whom was never known. Madame de Maintenon frequently visited her *at* the convent.

D'Argenson and St. Marc, both equally unprepared to hear this denouncement, soon recovered from the surprise into which it momentarily threw them, the former resuming his deferential air, and listening with stoical indifference St. Marc imitating his superior's example; when the unhappy prisoner had given vent to his agonized feelings, the Lieutenant of Police said, in a tone of consummate hypocritical commiseration:

"I am sure, Highness, His Majesty will pray Heaven to preserve your days! He will attribute your Highness' uncharitable denouncement to the disturbed state of your Highness' mind, and will grieve that he cannot alleviate the sufferings your Highness experiences! The last act of my duty is to warn your Highness that any attempt to escape hence, or to disclose the Secret of the State by the adoption of stratagems similar to those which your Highness' ingenuity has heretofore suggested, will be visited by His Majesty's extreme displeasure! And should your Highness, under any pretext unmask before those whose duties may bring them into your Highness' presence—*Monsieur le Gouverneur* excepted—the penalty will be death to the person seeing your Highness' features!"

"And to *me?*" exclaimed the prisoner, interrogatingly.

"His Majesty has given me no instructions," replied D'Argenson.

"Then if thou hast fulfilled thy mission," resumed the former, petulantly, "remove thyself from my sight! And do thou—" he now addressed St. Marc—"return hither in an hour hence!"

Bowing profoundly, the Lieutenant of Police withdrew followed by the Governor, both retracing their steps to the Council-chamber.

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A few days after the above events, the two officers who had accompanied the Man with the Iron Mask to Paris, received an audience of the King, who conferred upon each a brevet of captain in his regiment of body-guards as a mark of his satisfaction; Monsieur de St. Marc's recompense for the peculiar services he had rendered His Majesty, was his appointment to the lucrative post of Governor of the Bastile, a post he occupied until his death in 1708, at the advanced age of eighty-eight,* whilst Monseigneur D'Argenson gained *only* the *unlimited* confidence of the King.

* * * * * * * *

But before we give the sequel to this eventful episode, we must relieve our Readers' anxiety relatively to the fate of Ignace Cornu, whom we left shut up in the guard-house of the hamlet of Cape Le Gros, with the functionary upon whom had devolved the office of executing D'Argenson's behests.

The conversation that passed between the kind-hearted magistrate

* His successor was Charles le Tournier de Bernaville who fulfilled the same office ten years.

and his chief clerk ever remained a profound secret to the villagers of Le Gros, as did also the mode by which Ignace contrived to conceal himself without the knowledge of papa Tirelire; as, however, it was satisfactorily ascertained that he had twice or thrice in the course of that afternoon paid a flying visit to the GOLDEN BEE, and at each time imbibed two or more *petit verres*, it was currently believed that he took advantage of a favourable opportunity to slip unperceived up-stairs, where he remained concealed until in his over-anxiety not to lose a word of the conversation between the Lieutenant of Police and the prisoner, or in his efforts to steal a glimpse of this mysterious individual's features, he missed his footing and fell, an accident that, as already known, led to his immediate detection.

But though we cannot give a single syllable of the magistrate's colloquy with Cornu, we can state the result of it, which was that this worthy individual resolved upon an expedient to save him, and that in about ten days after, Monseigneur D'Argenson received a letter signed by the magistrate, by Pierre Durand the fisherman, and by nearly all the inhabitants of Le Gros, imparting the "*melancholy intelligence of the accident by which Ignace Cornu lost his life whilst on his way to the isle of St. Margaret, Pierre Durand's skiff having capsized in a sudden squall, quite drowning Ignace, and nearly doing as much for Durand, and those who were with him, including the magistrate himself,*" and which letter, D'Argenson having first read, consigned to the flames, observing inwardly "that the fool was better at the bottom of the sea than anywhere;" nor did he ever discover the cheat that had been practised upon him, his duties never again calling him so far away from the capital, more important matters soon driving all remembrance of the affair from his mind.

The lesson taught to Ignace was not lost upon him; he became a pattern of taciturnity, and was cited by all his fellow-villagers as the only man who knew how to keep a secret, for he never could be induced to divulge the conversation he heard whilst concealed in the closet; indeed it never would have found its way into these pages but for one circumstance; namely; some five years after his *last* mis-hap—Ignace took a wife!

We may state, in conclusion, that the family of the Cornus is now a very extensive one, and should the Reader ever visit Paris and by any chance find himself in the Quartier Latin, he is almost certain to stumble against a small house situated at the top of the *Rue de la Harpe*, on the right hand side, the lower portion of which—turned into a wine shop—is at present (or was three years ago) tenanted by one of the direct descendants of *the* Cornu, for which fact we have the evidence of the name painted in yellow letters over the door, besides certain other testimony which we are not at liberty to publish, it having been confided to us in the strictest confidence; for, be it said, the characteristic trait which, *after his fright*, distinguished *Ignace* Cornu has been perpetuated from generation to generation, all his descendants being remarkable for their taciturnity and *for the fidelity with which they keep a secret.*

SECOND PERIOD. 1703.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

NUMBER FOUR LA BERTAUDIÈRE.

On the night of the twenty-first of May, Seventeen hundred and three, six years after the events last recorded, a fearful scene was enacted in the chamber of the Bastile known as Number Four la Bertaudière, which, from the first day of his arrival had been set apart as the cell of "The Man with the Iron Mask."

Before, however, we proceed with our narration, let us be allowed to take a retrospective glance at a few circumstances that are calculated to throw some degree of light upon the tragedy we have to disclose!

For considerably more than a fortnight before the above-mentioned day, an unusual degree of excitement had prevailed amongst the superior functionaries of the Bastile, in consequence of the repeated visits that Monseigneur D'Argenson had been observed to pay to Monsieur de St. Marc, frequently coming two and three times within the twenty-four hours, and remaining in close conference with him every time, sometimes for an hour, sometimes for more, sometimes for less, but always protracting his visits to far beyond their duration on ordinary occasions.

Numerous and various were the reports and surmises that circulated amongst the officers of the garrison with reference to the object of these interviews, without their being able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion; public affairs seemed to be going on in the usual way, whilst nothing had occurred within the fortress to call forth such unprecedented activity on the part of the Lieutenant of Police, for with *the one* exception, every thing remained as quiet and as gloomy as heretofore; all at once—to the increased wonderment of these speculators upon probabilities—about a week before the period stated, Monseigneur D'Argenson suddenly discontinued his visits; the circumstance was, of course, sharply canvassed, variously accounted for, acknowledged by all as being passing strange, and finally, that is to say within twice the revolution of the shadow on the dial, forgotten, like the many other passing strange events that were in the habit of occurring within that dreary pile.

It was remarked, notwithstanding, that of late, namely, from the time that the frequency of the visits of the Lieutenant of Police

first excited attention, the Governor, Monsieur de St. Marc, had grown more than usually grave and morose, that his countenance wore an air of uneasiness not habitual to it, and that he appeared weighed down by some all-absorbing thought; but this fact, though it called forth a few passing observations, was likewise soon lost sight of.

At about ten o'clock on the evening of the day preceding that on which occurred the scene we are about to describe, Monsieur de St. Marc, accompanied by his nephew, Corbé, and Monsieur de Joncas, had, according to his usual custom before retiring to rest, repaired to the chamber of his mysterious prisoner, Monsieur de Joncas mounting guard at the foot of the tower, and Corbé performing the same service outside of the captive's cell, St. Marc entering it alone; as he ascended the narrow flight of stairs, and approached the den in which "THE MAN WITH THE IRON MASK" was confined, he might have been observed to hesitate, several times looking uneasily at Corbé, (who followed him with a torch) grasping the hand-rail with a convulsive clutch, or stopping to wipe his face, on which the perspiration stood in cold, clammy drops

"Art thou not well, uncle?" exclaimed Corbé, suddenly, remarking his relative's unusual trepidation, when they stood face to face upon the landing.

St. Marc shuddered, but quickly responded, though in a husky voice:

"I have ascended the sairs too fast, that's all!"

"*I* thought now, we came up more slowly than usual," retorted his dutiful nephew, raising the torch to enable St. Marc more readily to find the key-hole.

The latter did not reply, but pushed open the massive outer door with a degree of petulance that betrayed less ill-humour than a sudden resolve to overcome some secret repugnance, and then thrust the key into the lock of the second door, closing the first, and leaving Corbé standing outside.

St. Marc did not boldly enter that gloomy chamber; he hesitated to cross the threshold, and having crossed it, suddenly crouched down a little forwards, as if listening whether the prisoner was moving; all appeared quiet; gradually he resumed his erect posture, and glided stealthily towards the opposite angle, every now and then stopping short and listening, then again advancing until he was within two strides of the bed, when he once more stopped, carrying his left hand to his heart, and pressing it hard as if to check the violence of its throbbings.

We said the chamber was gloomy, but only in this particular did it resemble the other cells of the fortress; it was furnished almost with elegance, though the extreme nudity of the walls gave it an air of discomfort incompatible with the various articles of luxury within them. On the table were the remains of the prisoner's last repast, consisting of a few of such delicacies as the season afforded, with dried fruits, and wine in a silver flagon, the platters and other table-appurtenances being of the same metal, as was also a double-branched chandelier in which two *bougies* were still burning; in one angle of the cell stood couch, on which lay a guitar and a few books, and on a small table

by its side, paper and writing materials; the curtains of the bed were drawn half-aside; on it was stretched the unfortunate captive, apparently in a deep sleep, his face turned toward the wall.

St. Marc stood nearly half a minute in the position we have described, when, having succeeded in recovering a portion of his ordinary equanimity, he again crouched forwards as if to ascertain, by the prisoner's breathings, whether he was sound asleep; apparently satisfied as to this fact, he made one step towards the table, and seizing the flagon looked eagerly into it, his hand trembling violently the while, and his countenance suddenly turning cadaverously livid. At this moment, the sleeper groaned heavily; St. Marc started, involuntarily letting the vessel he held fall to the ground, and spilling the remainder of its contents; almost at the same instant he snatched off his beaver, which he had until now retained, and recovering himself somewhat, advanced owards the bed.

"Is your Highness ill?" inquired he, in a half suffocating voice.

But the prisoner replied not, nor stirred.

The Governor paused awhile, then reiterated his question.

This time the unknown groaned heavily and with a painful effort turned over on his other side and faced his interrogator.

Having cast off the odious disguise which a most inhuman policy had condemned him to wear, his features were fully exposed, showing a countenance that once seen could never be forgotten; it was indeed most noble and imposing (though now distorted by anguish) strikingly resembling that of Louis Quartorze, so much so that the two might easily have been mistaken for each other; each had the same contour, the same expression, the same aquiline nose, the same eye, the same full, voluptuous chin, the same broad, dark, well-defined brows, meeting in the middle between the eyes, and even the same swarthy complexion; his face was closely shaven—an office that *St. Marc* performed for him every day—but his hair, once so dark, time and trouble had turned nearly gray.

"Is your Highness ill?" asked St. Marc for the third time, with less trepidation than before.

The prisoner again moaned piteously, and raised himself with some difficulty, supporting himself on his elbow:

"Drink! Water!" exclaimed he in a faint voice.

St. Marc poured some out into a goblet and handed it to him; he eagerly swallowed its contents.

"More!" cried he.

The Governor replenished the vessel a second time, and a second time the captive emptied it.

"When was your Highness taken ill?" inquired St. Marc.

"'Twas the wine!" answered the other.

St. Marc shuddered, and his teeth chattered, but instantly recovering himself, he echoed the prisoner's words with as much astonishment as his conscience—or that which held the place of it—would allow him to muster.

"Yes! the wine!" returned the latter; here he carried his hand to his temple, interrupting himself and exclaiming; "oh, how it burns!"

The unfortunate sufferer attempted to rise to his feet but his strength failed him, and he fell backwards upon the bed; St. Marc immediately assisted him up, placing him in a sitting posture, and supporting him in his arms.

"Oh, Sieur Governor," gasped the captive, "I am very ill!"

"Your Highness appears so!" replied the Governor, huskily; "what can I do?"

"Send—send for—a—a confessor!" was the almost inarticulate response, and at the same time, the sufferer's head fell heavily upon St. Marc's shoulder, a spasmodic shudder convulsing his frame, his hands being nervously clutched.

The hoary jailer did not attempt to move; mechanically raising the captive's head, he fixed his eyes upon the distorted features, anxiously noting every change that passed over them.

An awful pause of more than half a minute ensued, during which the prisoner gasped for breath several times, renewing his efforts to speak, his gaze being riveted reproachfully upon St. Marc; at length, recovering momentary energy, he suddenly disengaged himself from his jailer's grasp, and stood upright; but his eye was vacant and glassy, his mouth pinched up, and his lips were parched and white; all at once his jaw dropped, for a single second he remained motionless, then tottered, and with a deep gurgling groan sunk heavily to the ground.

And thus the Iron Mask breathed his last.

St. Marc stood for a minute or two gazing at the body, and having satisfied himself that the last spark of life had fled, stealthily quitted the apartment.

The next morning at his usual hour, accompanied by de Joncas and Corbé, he repaired thither again, and observing the same precautions as was his wont, on ordinary occasions, entered the chamber, carrying the prisoner's *first breakfast*; he had scarcely disappeared within, however, before he hurried out again, and with a well-feigned air of consternation, announced the death of his victim to the two functionaries in waiting, after which he locked the doors, and making the best of his way to the council-chamber, instantly despatched a letter to D'Argenson informing him of the circumstance, and which the latter no sooner received than he posted off to the Bastile, where he arrived at about eleven in the forenoon.

He remained closeted with St. Marc for nearly half an hour, when Corbé was sent for to join the conference; it was after this protracted to a considerable length; D'Argenson then quitted the Bastile, the Governor accompanying him to the outer gate.

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At eight o'clock on the evening of that day, a coach drove into the outer court of the *château*, from which alighted D'Argenson, who, having exchanged a few words with some person within, proceeded to the council-chamber, where he found St. Marc and Corbé waiting to receive him; without a word being said, the three at once

directed their steps to the dead man's chamber, the Governor leading the way, Corbé coming last, bearing a torch and a large basket.

At the foot of the Bertaudière tower they were joined by two of the *porte-clefs* carrying a rudely constructed shell which they took up to the door of the cell and left there, Corbé, and St. Marc dragging it in after the men had departed, the latter locking the door.

D'Argenson crossed over to the spot where the body still lay—for it had not been removed—and taking the torch from Ru's hand, held it close to the face, considering it awhile without the slightest alteration of feature; not so St. Marc who became fearfully agitated, though he strove to conceal his trepidation, whilst Corbé betrayed no symptom of any emotion save of curiosity gratified; all at once the Lieutenant of Police turned abruptly about, and bade Corbé light the fire, signing to St. Marc to strip the corpse the while, he himself going round the cell, and by the aid of the torch, examining the walls, which the prisoner had covered with inscriptions of fearful import, and the various articles that were strewn about, casting all those that were combustible in a heap into the middle of the floor.

St. Marc having accomplished his odious task, now assisted D'Argenson in ransacking the boxes in which the prisoner's apparel was kept, the whole of which, to the very smallest object, was in like manner turned out in a heap, preparatory to being destroyed: but the most revolting part remains to be told.

On a word from the Lieutenant of Police, Corbé took out from his basket, first several large logs of wood, then a heavy hammer, a chisel, some nails, an adze, a large knife, and lastly a quantity of quick-lime, a portion of which he emptied into the shell, then, with D'Argenson standing over him the while, and St. Marc holding the torch, began to mutilate the dead boy, severing it limb from limb, the head from the trunk, the hands and feet from their corresponding members, not leaving even a single feature recognizable, and to crown all cleaving the skull in two; he afterwards crammed the mangled carcase into the shell, covering it with the remainder of the lime, and completed his hideous task by nailing down the lid, first taking the precaution of washing his hands and his arms, bared to above the elbow, and covered with blood: this done the Governor assisted him in conveying the corpse to the landing, where they left it.

"Thou art sure, Sieur Governor," said D'Argenson when they re-entered the cell, "that every article that belonged to the prisoner, or was used by him, is in this chamber!"

"I am, Monseigneur!" replied St. Marc; "his linen, his plate, his books, every thing is here!"

"Then do thou," resumed the Lieutenant of Police addressing Corbé, "see that every article be destroyed; leave not a rag, not a vestige; burn every thing; break up the plate and melt it; let his bed and bedding be also burnt; leave nothing but the bare walls, and *them*, Sieur Governor, see to have scraped, and whitened afterwards; see too that this flooring be taken up and destroyed, and another put down in its place; above all, let no one enter this cell,

till all has been done; I shall come to-morrow to see how my orders have been executed! And now, if thou art ready, thou can's't summon the soldiers to bear away the body."

St. Marc bowed, and quitted the apartment, but soon returned to intimate that the men were waiting; D'Argenson immediately withdrew, followed by the Governor, who locked the door upon his nephew leaving him occupied in the work of destruction.

* * * * * * *

Some years elapsed before the fact of the death of "THE MAN WITH THE IRON MASK" became currently known, so great were the precautions observed to conceal it; indeed as much trouble was taken to efface every trace of his existence after his death, as to enshroud him in mystery while he lived. When the Bastile was taken, a minute search was set on foot in order to discover some documentary evidence concerning him, but on examining the Official Register, in which the names of prisoners were usually entered, one folio was found wanting!

It was the folio *One Hundred and Twenty*, corresponding with the year 1797!

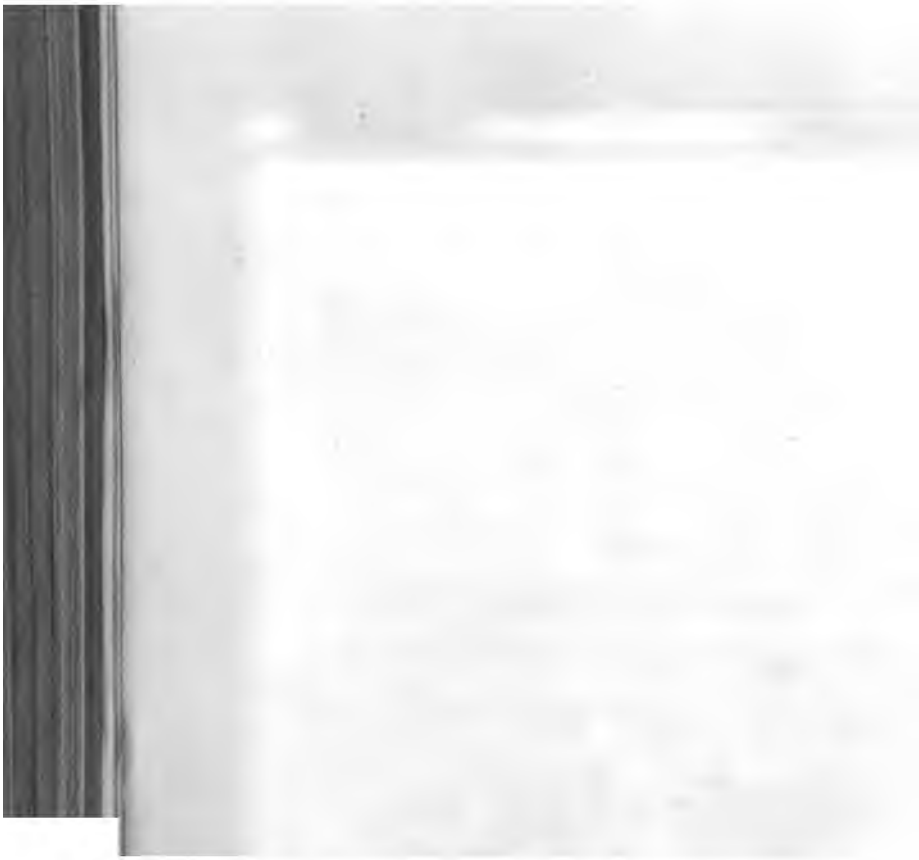
A further inquiry led to the examination of the parish register of St. Paul's in which, under the date above mentioned, was an entry signed "D'Argenson," and countersigned "Benigne d' Auvergne de St. Marc, and Michel de Chamillart;" the name of the defunct was MARCHIALI, his age 77, and it was established, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that under this name the Man with the Iron Mask was buried, his age corresponding with that stated in the register.

His remains were never found!*

* The foregoing facts are historical.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

We previously stated it not to be our intention in this portion of our work to enter into the question of the Iron Mask's birth and parentage, which we hope soon to set entirely and for ever at rest, having to this end, and at considerable pains, collected from various documents, (acting upon a hint or two borrowed from the M.S. of "THE OLD MAN OF THE BASTILE,") a mass of incontrovertible evidence relating thereto, which we purpose placing before our Readers in the shape of an Historical Romance to be intituled "THE EMBASSY, OR THE KEY TO A MYSTERY," forming the SECOND SERIES of "THE CHRONICLES OF THE BASTILE."

THE END.

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